A

HISTORY

OF

THE POLITICAL LIFE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT;

INCLUDING

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE TIMES IN WHICH HE LIVED.

BY JOHN GIFFORD, ESQ.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

NEC SIBI, SED TOTI GENITUM SE CREDERE MUNDO.—*LUCAN.*

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THE POLITICAL LIFE OF MR. PITT.

CHAPTER XVI.

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[1791.] THE debates on the Canada-Bill having produced an explicit declaration of opinion on the subject of the French Revolution, and not merely of opinion confined to that one object, but of *principles* applicable to all systems of government, and, consequently, to the British constitution itself, from the leaders of opposition in the House of Commons, the party exhibited strong apprehensions of a schism, and considerable efforts were made to prevent it. The friends of Mr. Fox accused him of imprudence in entering upon a subject which the question, under discussion, did not of necessity require; but this was an imprudence of which Mr. Fox was often guilty, for he was woefully deficient in judgment, and constantly *committed him-*

self, by advancing general principles when only called upon to give his opinion upon particular topics.—They made advances to those who were known to be more particularly attached to Mr. Burke, and who, indeed, were not less anxious than themselves, to avert a division which would, in fact, dissolve the party. They all were disposed to think, even those who thought with Mr. Fox, as those who differed from him, on the French Revolution, that a declaration of abstract principles was not a sufficient ground for separation, and that it would be time enough to separate when any national question should occur, to call for a practical application of those principles.

Mr. Burke, however, thought differently, and thought more justly. No one was more strongly attached than himself to his friends, both personal and political; but his sense of public duty now rose superior to all feelings of attachment, and reigned paramount over every private consideration. He had viewed the recent transactions in France, not only through a statesman's glass, but with a prophetic eye.—His comprehensive mind had, as it were, with intuitive wisdom, grasped all their bearings and tendencies; he perceived that the principles and the actions of the Gallic reformers were neither meant to be, nor in their nature could be, limited to the country which gave them birth; but that they were calculated for all nations, and for all ages, to eradicate every thing that was settled, every thing that was good, every thing that was worthy of preservation, and to substitute in their place every thing that was infamous, impure, and unholy. He was aware that the pretexts for promulgating those principles, and for committing those actions, were of a description to apply equally to every country, and to every constitution; that no form of government could resist, that no results of experience could withstand, them. The approbation which they had already received from different societies in England, now daily increasing in numbers, and in violence, had filled him with well-founded alarm, that his native country would not escape their pestilential touch, and that the mania of rebellion would infect her inhabitants. Every object around him, at this period, served to strengthen his apprehensions, and to confirm his suspicions. Clubs were rising in every part, and congratulatory addresses were sent to the National Assembly, who were com-

plimented, not merely for what they had done in their own country, but for *the wonderful revolution which they had prepared for the rest of the world.** Mr. Burke's sentiments on these subjects had been delivered to the public in a work sufficient of itself to immortalize his memory; exhibiting the finest effusions of a rich and lively imagination, but distinguished still more for soundness of judgment, and solidity of wisdom. It was impossible for him, therefore, not to believe that the admiration which Mr. Fox had so recently, and repeatedly, expressed of the French Revolution, was intended, as indeed it was calculated, to counteract the salutary effects of his own publication, and to hold up its author as the advocate for despotism, while Mr. Fox proclaimed himself to be the Champion of Liberty. It must not be forgotten too, that, at this time, Paine's Rights of Man, and other tracts of a similar nature and tendency, had appeared, and were most industriously circulated through the kingdom. Under these circumstances, Mr. Burke's feelings and apprehensions were perfectly natural both in respect of Mr. Fox, and with regard to the country. He considered that Mr. Fox's name and authority would be a tower of strength to the factious, and would give them an adventitious weight, that would be of essential service to their cause. All attempts, therefore, of others, to compromise the difference between them, or, of themselves, to continue to act as public friends, after the grand basis of political friendship—*idem sentire de republicâ*—was removed, of necessity proved fruitless: they both stood committed to their country, and it remained to be seen in favour of which the country would decide.

Mr. Burke having thus resolved to defend his own principles against those of Mr. Fox, in the same place in which they had been attacked, determined to avail himself of the opportunity which the re-commitment of the Canada-bill would afford him, for the renewal of the subject. He then apprized some of the ministers of his intention, claiming their assistance in the House, to secure him against those clamorous interruptions which he had before experienced;—and he afterwards

* See the answer of the Revolution Society to the friends of the constitution, and of equality, in the City of Montpelier; dated London, March 27, 1791; in the *Correspondence of the Revolution Society, &c.* 8vo. p. 44.

communicated his plan to Mr. Fox himself. When the question came before the House, Mr. Sheridan moved that the bill should be re-committed till after the Easter recess; at the same time, declaring that his own objections went to the fundamental principle of the bill, and, of course, could not be removed by any alterations which it might undergo in the committee.—Some of the members of the Opposition, alarmed at the prospect of the approaching schism, deprecated all allusion to subjects foreign to that under discussion; and Mr. Taylor observed, that the business had been improperly treated, as involving the consideration of general principles of government, and the constitutions of other countries; and he gave notice, that if the minister, or any other right honourable gentleman, should wander from the proper subject of discussion, he should call him to order, and take the sense of the House upon the occasion.

This unparliamentary conduct, (for nothing could be more unparliamentary than to anticipate a disorderly debate,) tending to limit the freedom of debate, and to confine enlarged and liberal minds within the narrow sphere of discussion which minds of a different texture prescribe to themselves, or rather which nature prescribes to them, was adopted solely for the unparliamentary purpose of preventing the dissensions of a party. Mr. Burke, however, though so pointedly alluded to, suffered Mr. Fox to rise first, who entered into some explanation of his former speech, and contended that, in forming a government for a colony, some attention must be paid to the general principles of all governments. In the course of that session, he said, he had taken opportunities of alluding, perhaps too often, to the French Revolution, and to shew, whether right or wrong, that his opinion, on the whole, was much in its favour; but on this bill he had introduced only one levity, silly enough, perhaps, and not worth recollection, which had any relation to the French Revolution; he meant an allusion to the extinction of nobility in France, and its revival in Canada. Certainly he had spoken much on the government of the American States, because they were in the vicinity of Canada, and were connected with that province.—The prudence of concealing his opinions, was a quality which his dearest friends had not very often

imputed to him;—he thought the public had a right to the opinions of public men on public measures; and he declared, that he never stated any republican principles, *with regard to this country*, in or out of Parliament.—He added, that, in the future discussion of the Canada-bill, though he should be extremely sorry to differ from some of his friends, for whom he entertained a great respect, he should not be backward in delivering his opinion, and he had no wish to recede from any thing which he had formerly advanced.

This irregular conversation was closed by Mr. Burke, who, with great feeling, assured the House, that nothing had ever given him greater affliction than the thought of meeting his friend as an adversary and antagonist.—After noticing the anticipation which had been suggested, and the observations which had been made, but for which he trusted he had given no just cause, he declared his sentiments, that, in framing a new constitution, it was necessary to refer to principles of government, and examples of other constitutions, because it was a material part of every political question, to examine how far such and such principles have been adopted, and how they have succeeded in other places.—This, indeed, is so obvious a truth, that it affords matter of astonishment that any one could be found to dispute it. Mr. Burke proceeded to state, that his opinions on government were not unknown, and the more he considered the French constitution, the more sorry he was to see it. In the preceding session he had thought himself under the necessity of speaking very fully upon the subject; but since that time he had never mentioned it, either directly or indirectly; no man, therefore, could charge him with having provoked the conversation which had passed.—He declared, however, his intention of giving his judgment on certain principles of government in the future progress of the Canada-bill.—He touched on the difference between Mr. Fox and himself, and desired it to be recollected, that, however dear he considered the friendship of that gentleman, there was something still dearer in his mind—*the love of his country*;—nor was he stimulated by ministers to take the part which he should take; for, whatever they knew of his political principles, they had learned from him, not he from them.

Having brought down the debates on the Canada-bill, much more important in themselves, and in the consequences which they produced, than the subject which gave rise to them, to the Easter recess, it becomes necessary to revert to another topic of discussion, recommended to the attention of Parliament in a message from the King.—In this message, which was delivered on the 28th of March, his Majesty informed the House, that the endeavours which he had used, in conjunction with his allies, to effect a pacification between Russia and the Porte, having hitherto been unsuccessful, and the consequences which might arise from the further progress of the war being highly important to the interests of his Majesty and his allies, and to those of Europe in general, his Majesty judged it requisite, in order to add weight to his representations, to make some further augmentation of his naval force; and he expressed his reliance on the zeal and affection of Parliament to make good such additional expense as might be incurred by such preparations, for the purpose of supporting the interests of his kingdom, and of contributing to the restoration of general tranquillity on a secure and lasting foundation.

The grand object of this interference, between the belligerent powers, was to preserve that balance which the wisest statesmen had thought necessary for the protection and security of the weaker states against the ambition and violence of the stronger; and to prevent the aggrandizement of a potentate, who had displayed, on all occasions, the most marked spirit of hostility against this country.—That this was a wise and salutary policy cannot be denied; it was by a similar principle that the conduct of the whigs, under King William, and of every wise administration, from that reign to the present, was regulated;—and the only fair subject for consideration, in the present instance, was, whether the balance of power would be so deranged by the aggrandizement of Russia, and the humiliation of the Porte, as to justify the active interference of Great Britain. The war between these two states had been carried on with a degree of inveteracy of which the history of modern times supplies but few examples; and Europe and Asia had been deluged with the blood of their respective troops.—The good fortune, and the superior discipline and prowess, of the Russians at length

prevailed, and the period had now arrived, when the Turks, harassed, defeated, and exhausted, reluctantly acceded to proposals for negotiating a treaty of peace, which had, indeed, become equally necessary to their victorious enemy,—as well to afford her time for recruiting her armies, and for replenishing her treasures, as for maturing those plans which she had already formed for extending her dominions by the partition of Poland.

Mr. Pitt, apprized of the ambitious projects of the Russian Empress, and sensible of their tendency to destroy the balance of power, and to give her, in the scale of Europe, a preponderance which would be highly detrimental to the interests of Great Britain, had, in concert with the court of Berlin, offered the mediation of this country, with a view to prevent, as far as possible, the imperial Catharine from extorting, from the humbled Ottomans, such terms as would greatly facilitate the accomplishment of her secret schemes. This mediation had, indeed, been offered at an early period of the war, when it was rejected, with pride and disdain, by the Empress, whose lofty spirit could ill brook control.—Nay, such was the indignation which she felt at any attempt to interfere with her plans of ambition, that she suffered no opportunity to escape for manifesting her resentment.—She had refused to renew the treaty of commerce with this country, which had recently expired; while, to render her conduct more pointed, she signed a commercial treaty with our natural rival, France, upon terms highly favourable to that nation. In these instances, however, she did no more than every independent power has a right to do; and, whatever umbrage her conduct might give to the Court of St. James's, it certainly afforded no reasonable ground of hostility. But the plans which she was known to have formed for her further aggrandizement, and (to say nothing of their flagrant injustice) their manifest tendency to augment her own power by the ruin of independent States, were to be considered in a very different point of view, and fully justified the active and determined interposition of those States which had combined for the laudable purpose of supporting the balance of power in the North of Europe. Catharine had openly avowed her resolution to interfere in the in-

ternal concerns of Poland, in order to prevent those projected improvements in the state of that divided country which would prove hostile to her own unprincipled plans.—That avowal alone was sufficient to alarm all the neighbouring States, and more than sufficient to justify any combination which had for its object the defeat of such schemes. But the ambition of Catharine, disdaining alike the suggestions of honour, and the dictates of justice, was not to be restrained within ordinary bounds: Poland alone was a sphere too contracted for the operations of her capacious and aspiring mind;—her views were extended to Turkey; and she had made no secret of her intentions to place the imperial Crown on the head of her grandson, Constantine, in the metropolis of the Ottoman Empire.—It was impossible that, to such views as these, a British minister could be indifferent;—Mr. Pitt, who was early apprized of them, had framed the whole system of his foreign policy for the purpose of counteracting them. His proffered mediation had been twice rejected; but Mr. Fawkener was, nevertheless, sent as envoy extraordinary to attend the negotiations for peace, between the contracting powers, and to afford all possible assistance to the Turks.—The great impediment to the conclusion of the treaty was the perseverance of Russia in insisting on retaining possession of the important fortress of Oczakow with its dependencies, which she had taken from the Turks in 1788. By this means she would secure an easy entrance into the Turkish Provinces, and materially facilitate her march to Constantinople, whenever a fit opportunity should occur for the accomplishment of her favorite scheme.

Such was the ground of that conduct which the King announced to the House of Commons in his message. On the 29th of March, the day after the message was delivered, Mr. Pitt moved an address to his Majesty, thanking him for his communication, and promising him support.—He supported his motion on the ground of general policy, and on the particular interest which, he contended, we had in the dispute between the beligerent powers. That interest he described as direct and important; and, as all our efforts for the restoration of tranquillity, had proved unavailing, we were induced to the necessity of arming, in order to give greater weight to our representations.

Having entered into defensive alliances, which were admitted to be wise and politic, it was our duty to adhere to them, and to prevent, as far as possible, any changes in the general state of affairs, which might render them nugatory. Any event which might affect the power of Prussia, who was our ally, and diminish her influence on the continent, would be injurious to ourselves, as far as our mutual interests were united. The successful progress of the Russian arms afforded sufficient grounds of alarm; for, should Russia pursue her career of victory, and the power of the Porte be farther humbled by its aspiring rival, Prussia would instantly feel the effect, and not Prussia alone, but all Europe itself, might prove in danger of being shaken to its very foundation.

Mr. Fox expressed his conviction that no danger could arise to Prussia, from any progress which the Russians might make in the dominions of the Porte;—and he reduced the point at issue to a very narrow compass, by putting the whole of our system of foreign policy, and the balance of power, entirely out of the question; and by stating the dispute between Great Britain and Russia, to be nothing more than whether the latter should restore the whole of her foreign conquests, or only a part of them. Having thus stripped the conduct of ministers of every thing in which it had originated, by which it was directed, and by which it either was attempted to be, or possibly could be, justified, he proceeded to infer, that the only ground of quarrel was her unwillingness to resign a tract of country, between the Niester and the Don, a barren and unprofitable tract, but particularly desirable to the Empress, as it contained the fortress of Oczakow, which, in her estimation, was a place of much value.—He condemned ministers for not having formed an alliance with Russia, which appeared to him to be the most natural, and the most advantageous, which we could possibly form.

These reasons were combated by Mr. Pitt, who again insisted that the aggrandizement of Russia, and the depression of Turkey, would materially affect both our political and commercial interests. But as he necessarily spoke under considerable restraint, as he was unable,

during the existence of a negotiation, to disclose any thing more than the general principles by which the conduct of ministers was directed, and his adversaries, availing themselves of this circumstance, had no difficulty, and made no scruple, to give a popular turn to their own arguments, he carried the question for the address by a majority of only ninety-three. And the opposition, encouraged by the unusual greatness of the number which divided with them, resolved again to bring the subject before the House.—Mr. Grey accordingly, on the 12th of April, moved a set of resolutions, the object of which was to express disapprobation of the very measures which the House had, by its address, directly approved. Mr. Grey, in supporting these resolutions, advanced certain abstract principles, from which he drew practical inferences, applicable, or rather applied by him, to the immediate subject of discussion.—Self-defence, he insisted, was the only justifiable ground of war, and neither we, nor our allies, were in danger of attack from Russia; therefore, war with Russia was unjust: and he contended, that it behoved ministers to shew how the balance of power could be endangered by the possession of Oczakow, by the Russians, before the nation should be called upon to support the war.—This art of *simplification* seems to have been principally relied on by the opposition, and, strange to say, it produced a much greater effect than any experienced politician, or rational individual, could possibly have expected. Mr. Grey, however, and his supporters, neither proved their experience as politicians, nor their reason as men, in maintaining that, were the Empress of Russia to realize all her imputed views of ambition, were she to obtain possession of Constanstinople itself, and to expel the Turks from all their European Provinces, mankind, so far from being injured, would be considerably benefited by it. The spirit of the ancient crusaders seems indeed to have been revived, at this period, by the opposition, who appeared as anxious to expel the infidels from Europe, as their ancestors, in former ages, had been to drive the Turks from Palestine, and to erect the cross on the ruins of the crescent. The confidence which ministers claimed was reprobated in language more strong than just, and with a degree of warmth, in which the decorum of legislators, and personal respect, were alike disregarded.

Mr. Pitt, and all the Members of the Cabinet, observed a profound silence, rather choosing to subject themselves to the effects of misrepresentation, than to betray the duty which they owed to their sovereign, and to the country. It was, however, observed, by those who were satisfied with their conduct, that the possession of Oczakow, by Catharine, would facilitate not only the acquisition of Constantinople, but of all Lower Egypt and Alexandria, which would secure to Russia the command of the Mediterranean, and render her a formidable rival, both as a maritime and a commercial power. It was truly remarked that the question was not of what intrinsic importance the Turkish empire might be, in itself, individually considered; but rather how the acquisition of a considerable and important part of it, by Russia, would affect the general safety of Europe, and the particular interests of Great Britain. But the Empress was not only charged with designs upon the Porte; her ambitious views were known to extend to the destruction of all the powers of the North. Mr. Grey's motion was lost by a majority of only eighty.

During this debate, Mr. Sheridan spoke with considerable warmth and animation, on the side of opposition, and concluded his speech with a renewal of his former panegyrics on the French Revolution, and with an expression of his *immutable* adherence to the opinions which he had lately promulgated on that event: and he declared his earnest wish that peace might be inviolably preserved with the new government of France. As not the smallest disposition had been evinced by the British ministry to interrupt the tranquillity which subsisted between the two countries, it might have been inferred, from the unnecessary expression of this wish, that Mr. Sheridan was aware, that the conduct of regenerated France would be such as to provoke a war with Great Britain.

This progressive diminution of the majority raised the spirits of the opposition, and encouraged them to persevere in their efforts, without the smallest regard to the consequences which they might have, either on their own country or on the general state of the northern powers. Mr. Baker, on the 15th of April, moved that it was at all times the

right and duty of the House, before they consented to lay any burdens on their constituents, to inquire into the justice and necessity of the object, in the prosecution of which such burdens were to be incurred; and, that no information had been given to the House which could satisfy them that the expenses to be incurred by the present armament were necessary to support the interest of the nation, or would contribute to the great and important object of restoring the tranquillity of Europe on a secure and lasting foundation. No new arguments were employed on this occasion,—but Mr. Pitt thought it necessary to make some few observations on the subject.—He said that, notwithstanding the many calls which had been made upon him, and the many harsh epithets which had been applied to his silence, his sense of duty to his Sovereign and his Country should still remain the rule of his conduct; he meant, therefore, to enter into no detail of the pending negotiation; —to offer no explanation inconsistent with his official duties. He contended that sufficient information had been given for the simple act of voting the armament, his Majesty having expressly stated, in his message, that such a measure was necessary to give effect to the negotiations, in which he was engaged, for laying the foundation of a solid and durable peace. He admitted, however, that the House was not pledged to support a war without further explanation; the House might repose confidence in the servants of the Crown pending a negotiation, but that was substantively different from a pledge to support a war, should the negotiations prove unsuccessful.—That which was a sufficient cause for an armament might not be a sufficient cause for a war.

Mr. Fox, however, refused to admit the justice of this distinction, and contended that the contrary was the fact.—In imitation of Mr. Sheridan, in a preceding debate, he closed his speech with a pompous panegyric of the new constitution of France. This called up Mr. Burke, but, as the hour was late, the general cry for the question induced that gentleman to forego his right of delivering his sentiments, in opposition to those of Mr. Fox; and the division took place, when the majority for the minister was found to have increased from *eighty*, to *ninety-two*. But such a majority was still deemed sufficiently en-

couraging to induce the opposition to hazard another division on the subject;—and it was brought forward, in a different form, on the 25th of May, by Mr. Thomas Grenville, who chiefly insisted on the right of the House to advise the King in the exercise of his prerogative, and on the necessity for exercising that right in the present instance, in order to prevent the consequences of an improper interference between Russia and the Porte. Mr. Pitt acceded to the principle, but denied the justice of its application to the point in question. The majority for ministers, on this question, was ninety-four. In the House of Lords the same question was discussed at length, and the same arguments were used on both sides, and with a similar result. It is certain, that Mr. Pitt's administration experienced a more formidable opposition on this point than it had hitherto experienced on any other.—But the ministers laboured under peculiar disadvantages from their inability to explain all the circumstances which first induced them to adopt, and afterwards to persevere in, the line of conduct which they, so consistently, and so resolutely, pursued. Had Mr. Pitt been at liberty to explain all that he knew respecting the designs of Russia on Poland, there can be no doubt but that he would have received the cordial support of a much greater majority of the House: and the result of this discussion proved the necessity of reposing a certain degree of confidence in the servants of the Crown, pending a negotiation with foreign powers. Such confidence could lead, in such a case as that in question, to no dangerous consequences; and if it should have afterwards appeared to have been misplaced or abused, the Parliament would have had it in their power to inflict a proper punishment upon ministers, whose responsibility would have increased in exact proportion to the confidence reposed in them. On the other hand, from withholding that confidence, the most mischievous consequences might arise; so that, upon a fair calculation of advantages and disadvantages, it is evident that the confidence ought to have been granted, since the former greatly overbalanced the latter.

But the constitutional mode of opposing the ministers, in Parliament, was not the only means adopted by Mr. Fox for defeating the projects of Mr. Pitt.—He had recourse to a measure unprecedented in

the annals of party, and wholly unjustifiable on any pretext whatever. He did not hesitate to send Mr. Adair, a gentleman known only as a distant relation of his own, to the Court of St. Petersburgh, as *his* representative, and for the express purpose of counteracting the endeavours of his Majesty's accredited minister to induce the Empress to accede to the proposals of the British cabinet. This transaction, which it is difficult to characterize in appropriate terms, cannot be so well described as in the language of Mr. Burke, who could not be suspected of entertaining any undue prejudice against one with whom he had long lived in habits of the closest intimacy, and of the most endearing friendship.

"The laws and constitution of the kingdom," says that eloquent writer, and sound reasoner, "entrust the sole and exclusive right of treating with foreign potentates to the king.—This is an undisputed part of the legal prerogative of the Crown.—However, notwithstanding this, Mr. Fox, without the knowledge or participation of any one person in the House of Commons, with whom he was bound by every party principle, in matters of delicacy and importance, confidentially to communicate, thought proper to send Mr. Adair, as his representative, and with his cypher, to St. Petersburgh, there to frustrate the objects for which the minister from the Crown was authorized to treat. —He succeeded in this his design, and did actually frustrate the King's minister in some of the objects of his negotiation.

"This proceeding of Mr. Fox does not, as I conceive, amount to absolute high treason, Russia, though on bad terms, not having been then declaredly at war with this kingdom; but such a proceeding is, in law, not very remote from that offence, and is, undoubtedly, A MOST UNCONSTITUTIONAL ACT, and AN HIGH TREASONABLE MISDEMEANOR.

"The legitimate and sure mode of communication between this nation and foreign powers is rendered uncertain, precarious, and treacherous, by being divided into two channels; one with the government, one with the head of a party in opposition to that

government; by which means the foreign powers can never be assured of the real authority or validity of any public transaction whatsoever.

"On the other hand, the advantage taken of the discontent, which at that time prevailed in Parliament, and in the nation, to give to an individual an influence directly against the government of his country, in a foreign court, has made a highway into England for the intrigues of foreign courts in our affairs. This is a sore evil; an evil from which, before this time, England was more free than any other nation. Nothing can preserve us from that evil which connects cabinet-factions abroad with popular factions here, but the keeping sacred the Crown, as the only channel of communication with every other nation.

"This proceeding of Mr. Fox has given a strong countenance, and an encouraging example, to the doctrines and practices of the revolution and constitutional societies, and of other mischievous societies of that description; who, without any legal authority, and even without any corporate capacity, are in the habit of proposing, and, to the best of their power, of forming, leagues and alliances with France."

The reception which this representative of Mr. Fox experienced at the Court of St. Petersburgh, was, of itself, sufficient to prove that the nature of his instructions was highly agreeable to the Empress, and, of course, that the instructions were such as any subject of Great Britain should have been equally ashamed to dictate, to deliver, or to bear. Mr. Adair had always the post of honour assigned him, at the right hand of Catharine, whenever the British Ambassador was present. The encouragement which this extraordinary mission afforded the Empress, made her persist in her claims on the Porte, and reject every proposal which the representative of the British Monarch made her, in behalf of that power. The treaty of Peace was concluded at Gralutz, on the 11th of August, by which Russia acquired the important fortress of Oczakow, and all the country between the Bog and the Niester, with the free navigation of the latter river. The presents made to Mr. Adair, on this occasion, were more costly than those which were made

to the King's representative. Had a subject of Catharine thus attempted to thwart her views at the Court of St. James's, the mildest fate that would have awaited him, on his return to Russia, would have been perpetual banishment in the Deserts of Siberia.—But the power which this Imperial Autocrate enjoyed, and the despotism with which she exercised it, removed from her bosom every apprehension of disobedience to her orders, or of opposition to her will. She had no dread, therefore, of the influence of example, in encouraging that conduct in a foreigner, which she would have punished with signal severity in a Russian. The impression produced on the public mind, in England, by the debates in Parliament, prevented the Minister from having recourse to hostile measures for giving effect to the mediation of his Sovereign; and Mr. Fox had the satisfaction of so far succeeding in his plan, though it failed to accomplish his main object,—the removal of Ministers.

After the Easter recess, the discussions on the Canada-bill were renewed, and the greatest expectations were excited in the public mind, from the known intention of Mr. Burke to enter more at large, than he had hitherto done, on those great points on which Mr. Fox and he had publicly differed. On the 6th of May, the House proceeded to the re-commitment of the bill, when Mr. Burke opened the debate: he remarked that, as they were about to appoint a legislature for a distant people; it was their first business to be previously convinced, that they were competent to the assumption of such a power. A body of rights, commonly called the "Rights of Man," had been lately imported from a neighbouring country, and held up, by certain persons in this kingdom, as paramount to all other rights. A principal article in this new code was, "That all men are born free, equal in respect of rights, and continue so in society." If such a doctrine were to be admitted, the power of the House would extend no further than to call together the inhabitants of Canada, and recommend to them the free choice of a government for themselves. But he rather chose to argue from another code, on which mankind, in all ages, had hitherto acted,—from the law of nations.—On this alone Mr. Burke conceived the competence of the House to rest; from this we

learnt, that we possessed a right of legislating for Canada, founded on a claim of sovereignty over that country, which was at first obtained by conquest, but afterwards confirmed, and acknowledged, by the cession of its former government, and established by a long uninterrupted possession.

After these preliminary remarks, Mr. Burke proceeded to consider on what model the proposed constitution was to be formed. The inhabitants of Canada were known to be composed of ancient French settlers, and of new American emigrants; it might, therefore, be proper to enquire whether the constitutions of France and America possessed any advantages which the British constitution could not impart; and which, if not given by the present bill, might make those people contemplate, with regret, the happier situation of their former countrymen. Having made several ingenious remarks on the nature and principles of the American constitution, which he considered as best adapted to the genius and manners of the inhabitants of the United States; he observed, that the Americans acted too wisely to set up so absurd an idea as that the nation should govern the nation; but formed a constitution as aristocratical, and monarchical, as their situation would permit; they formed one upon the admirable model of the British constitution, reduced to its primary principles. Yet he was averse from giving this constitution to the Canadians, because they might have one more nearly allied to the model which the Americans themselves had followed.

Mr. Burke then asked, whether the House should give to the French inhabitants of Canada the new constitution of France,—a constitution founded on principles diametrically opposite to our own; as different from it as Folly from Wisdom, as Vice from Virtue;—a constitution founded on what was called the Rights of Man? The authors of it had told us, and their partisans, the societies here, had told us, that it was a great monument erected for the instruction of mankind. This was certainly not done without a view to imitation.—But, before we proceed to give it to our colonies, it would be wise to examine what effects its practical application to the colonies of

France had produced, (where the new principles of Parisian politics had been introduced, and propagated with ardour,) that we might be enabled to appreciate the blessings which we were about to confer. The mode of reasoning from effects to causes was the old-fashioned way. It had been adopted in experimental philosophy, and might, with equal propriety, be applied to the philosophy of the human mind:—He should therefore use it now. The French West-India Islands were in the most flourishing state, until the fatal moment when the Rights of Man were imported.—Scarcely, said Mr. Burke, was this precious doctrine received among them, when Pandora's box, replete with all mortal evils, seemed to fly open, hell itself to yawn, and every demon of mischief to overspread the face of the earth. Blacks rose against Whites,—Whites against Blacks,—and each against the other in murderous hostility; subordination was destroyed; the cords of society torn asunder; and every man appeared to thirst for the blood of his neighbour.—The mother-country, not receiving any great degree of pleasure in contemplating this image of herself reflected in her child, sent out a body of troops, well instructed, likewise, in the new principles, to restore order and tranquillity. These troops, immediately upon their arrival, felt themselves bound to become parties in the general rebellion, and, like most of their brethren at home, began the assertion of their free-born rights, by murdering their general.—Should such an example induce us to ship off, for Canada, a cargo of the Rights of Man?

In order to shew that these evils arose from the new principles themselves, and not from any cause peculiar to the West Indies, Mr. Burke described the effects which they had produced in the mother-country. The National Assembly of France had boasted, that they would establish a fabric of government, which time could not destroy, and the latest posterity would admire. The boast had been echoed by the Clubs of this country,—the Unitarians, the Revolution Society, the Constitutional Society, and the Club of the 14th of July. The Assembly had now continued nearly two years in possession of the absolute authority which they usurped; yet they did not appear to have advanced a single step in settling any thing

like a government; but to have contented themselves with enjoying the democratic satisfaction of heaping every disgrace on fallen royalty. The constitution must be expected now, if ever, to be nearly completed;—to try whether it was good in its effects, he should have recourse to the last accounts of the assembly itself. They had a King, such as they wished; a King who was no King; over whom the Marquis de la Fayette, chief gaoler of Paris, mounted guard. Mr. Burke was proceeding to describe the circumstance of the Parisian mob having surrounded the royal carriage, on the road to Saint Cloud, with a view to prevent the King from proceeding to that palace, when he was called to order by the members of the opposition, and a singular altercation ensued, which lasted for some time. This interruption was evidently designed to prevent him from continuing his speech;—and, for some time, all the efforts of Mr. Burke to be heard, on the point of order, were fruitless, though supported by Mr. Pitt, and two or three others of the ministerial side of the House.—The extraordinary scene was, at length, terminated by a motion from Lord Sheffield, "That dissertations on the French constitution are not regular, or orderly, on the question 'That the clauses of the Quebec bill be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.'"—Strange to say, Mr. Fox, who had, in former stages of this very bill, introduced similar dissertations, seconded the motion.

Mr. Pitt, who had before been called upon for his opinion, by Mr. Grey and Mr. Sheridan, drew a distinction between a question of order and a question of discretion.—In point of discretion, he expressed a wish that the French Revolution should not be discussed.—But he did justice to Mr. Burke's motives, which he could trace to no other source than a pure regard for the constitution of his country; and he thought him fully in order, as the bill went to give a constitution to a people, at once French, American, and English.

Mr. Fox taxed Mr. Burke with an evident eagerness to seek a difference of opinion, and an anxiety to discover a cause of dispute.—On the subject of the French Revolution he knew that their opinions were wide as the Poles asunder.—Still, however, he adhered to his

original sentiments, nor would he ever retract one syllable which he had said upon it.—He thought it, upon the whole, one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind.—But he desired to be understood, as thus speaking of the Revolution, and not of the Constitution, of France, which remained to be improved by experience, and accommodated to circumstances. The old despotism was annihilated; the new system had the good of the people for its object;* and that was the point on which he rested. With respect to the effect which the example of France might have on Great Britain, when any man could prove that this country was in the precise situation of France, at the time of her Revolution, then, and not till then, would he declare, disregarding all the obloquy which might be heaped upon such a declaration, that the French Revolution was an object of imitation for Great Britain.—He declared that he never wished to conceal his political opinions; but he did not approve of having a day fixed for catechising him.—He acknowledged that he had learned more from Mr. Burke than from all books and all men.—All his political knowledge was drawn from Mr. Burke's writings, speeches, and familiar conversation. During the American war, *they had rejoiced together at the successes of a Washington, and sympathized, almost in tears, for the fall of a Montgomery.*† To deny that the British constitution was founded upon the rights of man, he considered

* If Mr. Fox had said that the good of the people was the *pretext* for the Revolution, he would have been correct in his assertion; but he must wilfully have shut his eyes against the numerous facts which had occurred, and against the debates of the National Assembly, if he did not know that neither the object of the revolutionary leaders, nor the tendency of their measures, was the good of the people. The King, indeed, had that object nearest his heart; and he would have accomplished it, had his efforts not been counteracted by the machinations of the factious demagogues in the National Assembly.

† The reader will recollect, that WASHINGTON was the Commander in Chief of a *rebel* army; and that MONTGOMERY fell in the cause of *rebellion*, fighting against the troops of his, and Mr. Fox's, lawful Sovereign.—It is not surprising that, when the American rebels met with such supporters in the legislative council of the mother-country, the cause should succeed; but it is very surprising that a member of the British House of Commons should so far forget the allegiance which he owed to his King, should so far lose sight of that decency and respect which were due to the House, to his constituents, and to his country, as to make his encouragement of rebels the subject of his boast;—and it is still more surprising, that there should not have been a single member of the House of Commons to call him to order!

as nothing more nor less than an attempt to libel that constitution; and no book which Mr. Burke could cite, no words which he might use in debate, however ingenious, eloquent, and able, as all his writings and speeches undoubtedly were, should ever induce him to change, or abandon this opinion.

If there be wisdom in fortifying the mind against conviction, this declaration of Mr. Fox was eminently wise: but it behoved him, at least, to shew on what he founded his opinion, before he expressed his resolution never to abandon it. The nonsensical rhapsody to which the sages of regenerated France had ridiculously applied the pompous title of "The Rights of Man," had been the just object of Mr. Burke's derision. If Mr. Fox meant to say, that the British constitution was founded on *such* rights, it was *he* who libelled that constitution, and not Mr. Burke; and if he did not mean to say so, his observation was irrelevant, and could not apply to any part of Mr. Burke's speech.—It was calculated, however, to mislead the multitude, and it certainly tended to embolden the factious members of the different revolutionary societies, now established in the country.

Mr. Burke, in reply, truly remarked, that Mr. Fox's speech was one of the most disorderly ever delivered in that House.—His public conduct, words, and writings, had not only been misrepresented and arraigned in the severest terms, but confidential conversations had been unfairly brought forward for the purpose of attempting to prove his political inconsistency.—Such were the instances of kindness, which he had received from one whom he had always considered as his warmest friend. He could not conceive that the manner in which Mr. Fox had accused him of having spoken without information, and unsupported by facts, appeared to manifest any great degree of tenderness towards him. On the subject, however, of the French Revolution, uninformed as he might be supposed to be, he had not the least objection to meet Mr. Fox hand to hand, and foot to foot, in a fair and temperate discussion.

Mr. Burke disclaimed, in the most pointed manner, the having introduced this subject of discussion for the purpose of stigmatizing certain principles advanced by Mr. Fox on a former occasion. He had made no reference whatever to any of Mr. Fox's speeches; and he informed the House, that he had communicated to Mr. Fox the line of argument which he meant to adopt, and had actually shewn him all the books, pamphlets, and reports, which Mr. Fox now chose to suppose that he had never read.—He then stated his reasons for wishing to introduce the subject of the French constitution; and most sound and valid reasons they were.—In the first place, he felt desirous of pointing out the danger of perpetually extolling that preposterous edifice upon all occasions, and in the highest strain of panegyric. Mr. Fox had himself termed it "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity, in any time or country."—A second motive, which had some little influence over him, was of a more personal nature.—He had been accused both of writing and speaking of the late proceedings in France, rashly, unadvisedly, and wantonly.—This charge he was certainly anxious to refute; but, at the very time when he was about to produce facts in corroboration of his assertions, blended with private information and respectable authorities, he was stopped in the most unfair and disorderly manner.—Had he been permitted to continue his speech, he would have shewn, that the issue of all that had been done, and of all that was then doing, in France, could never serve the cause of liberty, but would inevitably tend to promote that of tyranny, oppression, injustice, and anarchy.

Seventeen years have elapsed since Mr. Burke thus anticipated the effects of those revolutionary proceedings, which Mr. Fox held up to the admiration, if not to the imitation, of surrounding nations. It was not the hasty anticipation of a lively fancy, and an ardent mind, apt to found its deductions on its wishes, but the calm result of a minute investigation of facts, instituted by a truly philosophic mind, eager in its search after truth, and accustomed to trace effects to their causes, and to follow causes to their effects. Now, that those consequences, which Mr. Burke foresaw, are no longer matters of opinion,

but objects of contemplation, it is impossible to withhold our tribute of respect and admiration, from that sublime genius which, from its deep knowledge of the present, was enabled to descry future, events; and from that rigid integrity, which, bursting asunder the fetters of political and personal friendship, led the venerable patriot, at a period of life when early impressions become rivetted to the heart, and identified with the affections, to sacrifice all private considerations, and deep-rooted prepossessions, on the altar of his country.—This was genuine, unsophisticated, unadulterated, patriotism; having for its motive the love, for its end the good, of its country!

What principally weighed with Mr. Burke, on the present occasion, and determined him in his conduct, was the danger which threatened our own government, from practices which were notorious to all the world.—Were there not clubs in every quarter, which met and voted resolutions of an alarming tendency? Did they not correspond, not only with each other, in every part of the kingdom, but with foreign countries? Did they not preach in their pulpits doctrines which were dangerous, and celebrate, at their anniversary meetings, proceedings incompatible with the spirit of the British constitution? Did they not every where circulate, at a great expense, the most infamous libels on that constitution? At present he apprehended no immediate danger.—The King was in full power, possessed of all his functions; his ministers were responsible for their conduct; the country was blest with an opposition of strong force; and the common people themselves seemed to be united with the gentlemen in a column of prudence. Nevertheless he maintained there was sufficient cause for jealousy and circumspection. In France, there were three hundred thousand men in arms, who, at a favourable moment, might be happy to yield assistance; besides, a time of scarcity and tumult might come, when the greatest danger was to be dreaded from a class of people, who might now be called low intriguers, and contemptible clubbists.

Towards the close of his speech, Mr. Burke, addressing himself to the two great political leaders of the House, expressed a hope that, whether they moved hereafter in the political hemisphere as two flaming meteors, or walked together, like brethren, hand in hand, they

would preserve and cherish the British constitution; that they would guard it against innovation, and protect it from the pestilential breath of French philosophy. He then broke into an impassioned apostrophe to the immeasurable and unspeakable power of the Deity, to whom alone, as a being of infinite perfection, belongs the omniscience, which sees all things in their first causes—while to us, poor, weak, incapable mortals, there is no rule of conduct so safe as experience.

He was answered by Mr. Fox, whose feelings, for a short time, subdued his powers of utterance.—He again justified his conduct, and considered Mr. Burke's strictures as unfair and unjust: he adverted to certain expressions of Mr. Burke, in the course of debates which occurred several years before, for the purpose of fixing upon him the charge of inconsistency. He thought the French Revolution such an acquisition to the cause of freedom, from the dominion of France over the manners of other nations, as to justify his former panegyric; and he apologized for the excesses of the French people, in its progress, by remarking that it was natural for them to be guilty of many extravagant and absurd actions, from the apprehension of a sudden return of that despotism which they had destroyed; experiencing the sensations ludicrously described by our great dramatic Poet, when he makes Falstaff exclaim,

"I fear this gunpowder Percy although he be dead."

If a shade were wanted to contrast our own constitution, it was to be found, not in the new system, but in the ancient despotism of France. Mr. Fox said, that he and his friends loved our own constitution on grounds independent of all external circumstances; yet they thought the French Revolution would do good to England; it might teach ministers not to endanger the just influence of the Crown, by overtraining it; and the people of England, if they should be disposed rashly to give way to innovations, might receive a warning from the confusions which had occasioned so much lamentation, and which were sufficiently great to deter others from lightly incurring similar

calamities, though they were trifling in comparison of the benefits to which they had led.

Where censure was so weak, and commendation so strong, it was manifest that the tendency of Mr. Fox's speeches was to recommend the example of the French Revolution to other nations. Mr. Burke complained of the allusion to the careless expressions, and playful triflings, of his unguarded hours, which he did not imagine would be recorded, and mustered up in the form of accusations, and not only have a serious meaning imposed upon them, which they were never intended to bear, but one totally inconsistent with any fair and candid interpretation. His arguments had been misrepresented; he had never affirmed, that the English, like every other constitution, might not, in some points, be amended.—He had never maintained, that, to praise our own constitution, the best way was to abuse all others. The tendency of all that had been said was to represent him as a wild,inconsistent man, only for attaching bad epithets to a bad subject. Having explained these former sentiments of his, which had been now attacked, he observed, that the inconsistency of his book, on the French Revolution with his former writings and speeches, had been insinuated and assumed; but he challenged the proof by specific instances.—And he also asserted, that there was not one step of his conduct, nor one syllable of his book, contrary to the principles of those men with whom our glorious Revolution originated, and to whose principles, as a whig, he declared an inviolable attachment.—He was an old man, and, seeing what was attempted to be introduced, instead of the ancient temple of our constitution, could weep over the foundation of the new.

Mr. Burke then again adverted to the endeavours sedulously employed, in this country, to supplant our own, by the introduction of the new French, constitution; but he did not believe Mr. Fox, *at present*, had that wish; and he did believe him to have delivered his opinions abstractedly from any reference to this country; yet their effect might be different on those who heard them, and still more on others, through misapprehension or misrepresentation. He commented

on the grounds on which Mr. Fox had explained his panegyric: the lesson to kings, he was afraid, would be of another kind. He had heard Mr Fox own the King of France to be the best-intentioned sovereign in Europe; his good nature and love of his people had ruined him;—his concessions had brought him to a gaol.—The example of the confusions, on the other hand, would have very little operation, when it was mentioned with tardy and qualified censure; while the praises of the Revolution were trumpetted, with the loudest blasts, through the nation. Mr. Fox had called the new French system a most stupendous and glorious fabric of human integrity; Mr. Burke conceived, that he possessed a better taste in architecture, than to bestow so magnificent an epithet upon a building composed of untempered mortar.—He considered it as the work of Goths and Vandals, where every thing was disjointed and inverted. As to the church, in particular, it had been said, by Mr. Fox, that the French had abolished all tests, and given a complete, unequivocal toleration.—So far from it, Mr. Burke insisted that they had established the most diabolical intolerance that ever existed on the face of the earth; and created a new test, not for the sake of security, but as the means of cruelty, oppression, and injustice; in order to afford an opportunity of depriving many thousands of individuals of their bread. The clergy were forced to take this test or starve; and yet France was the country in which there was said to be no test at all! He drew a striking picture of the persecutions to which the monks and nuns, and the pious few of the laity, were exposed throughout France; and he particularly instanced the unmanly and brutal severity inflicted on the sisterhood of the charity of St. Lazarus; an order of nuns who devoted themselves to the irksome duty of attending the patients in an hospital: these women were seized, dragged out, stripped, publicly whipped in the streets of Paris, and turned adrift on the world; and all this for no other offence than that of receiving the sacrament from a priest who had not taken the new civic oath, or test! The National Assembly were apprized of this abominable tyranny, " outraging at once, piety, charity, and decency;" yet had not the justice to punish, nor even the honesty to censure it.

But Mr. Fox had represented the new constitution of France as an experiment.—Mr. Burke thought, and justly thought, we had seen enough of it to judge of its practical effects; the new sovereigns of that country, he greatly apprehended, would proceed from tyranny to tyranny, from oppression to oppression, till the whole system terminated in the complete ruin of that miserable and deluded people. He closed his interesting observations, with the expression of a sincere hope, that no member of that House would ever barter the constitution of his country, that eternal jewel of his soul, for a wild and visionary system, which could only lead to confusion and disorder.

Mr. Pitt having declared his own opinion, that Mr. Burke had not been, even in the first instance, at all out of order, suggested the propriety of withdrawing the motion which had been made by Lord Sheffield.—He conceived that the constitution could be in no immediate danger, but declared, that if thereafter there should appear to be a more serious ground of apprehension, and that ground should be distinctly stated by Mr. Burke, he should be eager to give that gentleman his warmest and most effectual support. He thought Mr. Burke entitled to the gratitude of his country, for having, on that day, in so able and eloquent a manner, expressed his sense of the degree of danger which already existed; and assured him, that he would himself most cordially co-operate with him in taking every possible means to preserve, what he esteemed, the most perfect constitution in the world, and to deliver it down to posterity as the best security for the prosperity, freedom, and happiness, of the British people.

The Canada-bill was further discussed on the 11th of May, when Mr. Fox took occasion to explain his political opinions, evidently with a view to remove certain unfavourable impressions which he knew to have been made by his late speeches in Parliment.—He now declared, that there could be no good and complete system of government, without a due mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy; and, however unfavourably one gentleman might construe his sentiments, yet he considered our own aristocracy as the proper poise of

the constitution, the balance that equalized and meliorated the powers of the two other extremes, and gave firmness and stability to the whole. He, nevertheless, did not think it wise, in an infant government, where no previous materials for such an aristocracy existed, to make that branch of the legislature hereditary. Property was, and had ever been, esteemed to be the true foundation of aristocracy, and upon that he proposed to build the aristocracy of Canada, since an act of Parliament could not give nobility like an English peerage. He thought it best to make the councils elective, with a higher qualification both for the electors and the elected, after the model of the American constitutions, where the three powers of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, were judiciously blended, although under different names.

It was truly observed by Mr. Pitt, that a different impression, from that which Mr. Fox's present speech was calculated to raise, had been made, both in that House and abroad, by the debate of the former night. Believing him now to be truly sincere, Mr. Pitt congratulated himself, that he might be sure of having the aid of such eloquence and talents, to resist any attempt, at any time, to impair or destroy any part of that edifice, which, for its beauty and perfection, was the admiration of the whole world, and the inestimable blessing of this country. He dwelt much, at large, upon the benefits resulting from the principle of aristocracy in a mixed government.

Some of Mr. Fox's notions were combatted by Mr. Burke, who observed, that, in a monarchy, the aristocracy must ever be nearer to the Crown, whence, as from the fountain of honour, it originated, than to the democracy; but in those governments, which had nothing monarchial in them, the aristocracy necessarily rose out of the democracy. He denied property to be the sole foundation of aristocracy; pointedly condemning a *close*, and praising an *open*, aristocracy. A *close* aristocracy, confined to birth, would, of course, preclude the possibility of raising virtue, however distinguished; talents, however eminent, and however applied; and public services, however important to the dignity of the peerage; and would, consequently, strip the Crown

of one of its best and most beneficial prerogatives. He objected to the council proposed by Mr. Fox, which he thought, in fact, to be of a democratical constitution; and he adduced the example of the general rebellion of the American colonies, in proof that assemblies so constituted, had the test of experience against them.—Then, leaving the subject immediately before the House, he remarked, that, at a time when open and avowed attempts were made to circulate pamphlets, and to disseminate doctrines subversive of the prerogative, and, consequently, dangerous to the constitution, it was unwarrantable for any good subject to be, day after day, holding out a parade of democracy, in order to set the unthinking many raging against the Crown. He conceived, that there then existed a run against monarchy, but this had been rashly represented as the mere idle coinage of his own brain;—he trusted, however, that the House would not rest too securely upon such a representation, but take care, in time, to guard against the impending danger. In saying what he had done upon the subject, he was conscious that he had done his duty; and hoped that he had in some measure, averted what might otherwise have effected the downfal of our justly-boasted constitution;—supported by such reflections, he was not deprived of consolation, although excluded from his party;—a gloomy solitude might reign around him, but all was unclouded sunshine within.

It was, on the other hand, asserted by Mr. Fox, that the constitution was more liable to be ruined by an increase of the power of the Crown, than by an increase of the power of the people.—On this point these two great politicians were at issue.—In examining into the accuracy of their respective opinions, it would be necessary to consider them not in the abstract, but in relation to the *times* in which they were delivered. It is perfectly clear, that the great majority of the people were, at this period, favourable to the French Revolution, notwithstanding all the crimes by which it was perpetrated, and all the enormities to which it gave birth *. Publications, in which the most violent, objectionable,

* I must not be supposed to mean, by this statement, that a majority of the people of England were infected with revolutionary principles, or that they were desirous of producing in England a revolution similar to that which had taken place in France. Nothing more is

and dangerous principles of the French Jacobins were adopted and commended, were circulated by societies instituted for the purpose ;—and the conduct of France was holden out, in plain language, to the imitation of England.—The necessary tendency of all these proceedings was to weaken, if not to annihilate, the attachment to royalty, which was, indeed, treated with little ceremony, and not unfrequently rendered the subject of derision.—The ties which had long bound the people to the throne were, by such insidious artifices, materially loosened, and a very slight concussion would have been sufficient to dissolve them. It was evident, therefore, that the constitution could be in no danger from the undue influence of the Crown ;—and it was equally clear to every unprejudiced person, who paid attention to passing events, that serious danger was to be apprehended from the growing disaffection of the people.—At such a period, then, it was as much the bounden duty of the patriot, to throw all his weight and influence into the scale of royalty, as it would be, at a different crisis, (if, in this kingdom, such a crisis could occur,) when the prerogative of the Crown had been strained beyond its due bounds, and a disposition evinced, by the Monarch on the throne, to transgress the limits assigned by the constitution to the regal power, and a conduct displayed hostile to the established religion and laws of the State,—to give the preponderance to the popular scale.—This duty Mr. Burke most faithfully and conscientiously discharged, at the period in question; while Mr. Fox adopted an opposite line of conduct, strengthening, by his speeches, the rising spirit of democracy, and so qualifying all his praises of the British constitution, as to make little impression on the minds of those who harboured a secret wish to subvert it.

intended to be advanced, than that the greater part of the public regarded the Ancient Government of France as highly despotic, and, considering the Revolution as calculated to correct the evils of despotism, and as conducive to the promotion of civil liberty, became blind to the destructive principles on which it was founded, to the horrible disorders which marked its progress, viewed it with unfavourable eyes, and cherished a sanguine wish for its success.—In process of time, however, a great change was produced in the public mind;—numbers became convinced that the events which followed the Revolution were the natural effects of the principles which gave it birth ; and, ultimately, very few indeed, if any, could be found to regard it with favour, or to speak of it with praise, who did not secretly approve those principles, and who did not wish to produce the same convulsions in their own country.

It has been correctly observed, by a contempory writer, that this disposition between the two great leaders of the Whig party, did not arise immediately out of the events of the French Revolution, and the discussions which grew out of them; there, manifestly, must have existed between them a marked and essential difference of principle, which no political event had hitherto occurred of a nature to call forth to public notice. It was the practical application of the principle of each to those great questions which it now became necessary to discuss, that first rendered the difference evident, and attracted the public attention towards it. Mr. Burke was a Whig of the Old School; formed on the principles which fixed the House of Brunswick on the throne; and Mr. Fox was a *Whig* only in name, a disciple of a new sect, which, seeming to have adopted for its motto the old adage, with a contracted signification—Vox populi, suprema lex est,—professed to make popular opinion the criterion of their principles, and the rule of their conduct; though their practice did not always correspond with their professions.

During these altercations, Mr. Pitt conducted himself with the greatest impartiality and honour. Far from seeking to foment the divisions between his political opponents, he endeavoured, as far as he consistently could, to allay them, by exhorting the common friends of both parties to interfere, for the purpose of conciliation. He even went no farther, in his arguments, than his duty imperatively required him to go; rendering, indeed, justice to the patiotic sentiments, and dignified conduct, of Mr. Burke, but abstaining from all observations that could irritate Mr. Fox against him.

On the 18th of May, Mr. Pitt opened his budget for the year; when it appeared, that the sum total of expence was 5,728,000*l.*; and the total of ways and means, for defraying it, 5,734,471*l.*;—the receipts exceeding the expenditure by only a few thousand pounds. No new imposts were, of course, necesary.—Mr. Sheridan, on a subsequent day, proposed a long string of resolutions to the House, the object of which was to show, that all Mr. Pitt's calculations, respecting the public income, and the reduction of the national debt, were fallacious. These resolutions were debated on successive days, and negatived by the

House; and a number of different resolutions, proposed by the minister and his friends, were adopted in their stead.—The Indian budget was opened by Mr. Dundas, on the 24th of May, who, in a very clear and full account of the state of our Indian government, made it appear, that there existed in that country, a surplus revenue of 1,409,079*l.* The accuracy of this statement was, indeed, questioned by Mr. Paul Benfield, and some other members; but the House gave their sanction to sixteen resolutions, in support of it.—On the 10th of June the Parliament was prorogued.

CHAPTER XVII.

The progress of Revolutionary Principles in England—Paine's Rights of Man—Means taken to promote its extensive circulation among the lower classes of People—its Effect—The Revolution Society—Justice of Mr. Burke's charges against it, proved from the contents of its own publication—Its abuse of Princes—Its wishes for the example of France to be imitated in all countries—Dr. Priestley—His admiration of the French Revolution—His wish for the extirpation of the Established Church, whose clergy he reviles as "Vermin who deserve no mercy"—Anticipates the destruction of Kings, Archbishops, and Bishops—Resolves to commemorate the seizure of the Bastille at Birmingham—Seditious hand-bill circulated on that occasion—The mob insult the commemorating Patriots—Demolish the house of Dr. Priestley—Commit other outrages—Are dispersed on the arrival of the troops—These riots produced by a seditious hand-bill—Reward offered for the discovery of its author—The Author absconds, but his name is known—Dr. Priestley's losses on this occasion—Made good by the Hundred—Destruction of his manuscripts no loss to Society—Unphilosophical lamentations of the Doctor—Echoed by the Students at Hackney College and by the Unitarian Preachers—Pernicious tendency of his writings—He abjures his country, and becomes an American citizen, after sending his son to become a citizen of France—Injustice of his complaints—His rejection of the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith—French affairs—Tyranny of the National Assembly—All freedom of debate destroyed—Indecent conduct of the galleries—Persecution of the non-juring priests—Conscientious scruples of Louis XVI.—Bishop of Clermont's letter to his Majesty on the subject of receiving the Sacrament at Easter—The King is insulted by a grenadier, while at chapel—Attempts to go to St. Cloud with his family—Is stopped by the mob—Appeals for protection to La Fayette's fruitless endeavours to disperse the populace—The king is obliged to return—Repairs to the National Assembly—Dastardly conduct of its Members—The King resolves to escape from Paris—Mirabeau is gained over to the Court—His project for restoring the regal authority—La Fayette suspects him—Curious conference between them—Death of Mirabeau—Sketch of his character—Emperor of Germany's advice to Louis XVI.—Indecision of the King—His extreme imprudence—He leaves Paris for Montmedy—Is arrested at Varennes, and compelled to return to Paris—The prevalence of republican principles—The King a prisoner in his Palace, with La Fayette for his gaoler—All regal power usurped by the Assembly—Firm conduct of the Royalists—The Sovereign attacked in the Assembly by Pethion—Who proposes a measure subversive of a fundamental principle of the new constitution—Furious speech of Brissot in the Jacobin Club—The King accepts the constitution and swears to observe it—The Assembly is dissolved—Conference at Pilnitz—Object of it—Declaration of Austria, Prussia, and the French Princes—Never

carried into effect—Objectionable passage in the declaration—Remarks upon it—The British Government takes no part in these proceedings—Motives of Mr. Pitt's conduct—His high ideas of National Independence—Is not yet alive to the danger of revolutionary principles—Is sincerely anxious for the preservation of Peace—Mr. Burk's exposition of French Principles—State of the public mind in England and France at the close of 1791.

[1791.] It has already been observed, that revolutionary principles had made a considerable progress in this country. Allusion has been made to the publications industriously circulated by the friends and admirers of the French Revolution.—Among these, Paine's *Rights of Man* took the lead. It was written in a style well calculated to catch the ear of the multitude, for whose use it had been principally composed;—the substance of the book was equally alluring; it taught the mob that they were the real sovereigns of the state; and that, although they could not *all* rule, yet that each of them was equally qualified, and equally entitled, to wear the Crown, with the individual then seated on the throne. It required much stronger minds than are possessed by any of the common people of Europe to resist the temptations here thrown in their way. In England, where every man is a politician, and where every ale-house exhibits a kind of senate in miniature, thanks to the indefinite number of vehicles for the conveyance, not only of public intelligence, but of political instruction; such doctrines could scarcely fail to make many converts, and to produce a strong effect. Paine's book was circulated by a great majority of the Dissenters, particularly by the Unitarians, and even by the Methodists, who not only introduced it into their families, for the use of their children, but distributed it widely among all their connections. One edition of *ten thousand copies* was printed, by a dissenting printer, for a dissenting bookseller,*

* I have not a wish to be personal, or I should here name the printer, the bookseller, and one, at least, of the agents, to whom I refer. The large edition in question was printed *after* the book had become the subject of prosecution.—And I have seen a copy in octavo, handsomely printed (in the house of a Methodist), which was never offered to public sale. In writing the history of the times in which we live, it is extremely difficult to do justice to the subject, without either deviating from rigid truth, or descending to invidious personality.—Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas,—should be the historian's rule. If personality cannot be avoided without injury to the cause of truth, recourse ought to be had to it, without scruple, and without fear; but, unless the plea of necessity can be fairly urged in its behalf, it ought to be studiously rejected by the historian.

who had been the publisher of all the principal *Unitarian* works which had appeared for several years. It was forwarded to all the market towns in the kingdom, whence it was dispersed among the neighbouring villages; and even trusty agents were employed to attend the market ordinaries in the country, for the purpose of inculcating its principles on the minds of those illiterate, unthinking, and credulous, rustics, who frequent them, and for forcing the book upon their notice.

Societies had been formed, in different parts of the kingdom, upon the plan of the Revolution Society; and, although they had not yet proceeded to those extremities to which they soon after had recourse, their avowed principles, and promulgated sentiments, were sufficient to rouze the government to vigilance, if not to fill them with alarm. A regular correspondence was carried on with the Revolutionary Societies in France, from which even delegates were sent to compliment the associated sons of French liberty in this country, and, no doubt, to instruct them in the application of the principles of the modern philosophy to practical purposes. The very correspondence published, by the Revolution Society, for the avowed purpose of proving the injustice, and *malevolence*, of Mr. Burke's charges against them, demonstrates, beyond the possibility of doubt, the justice of those charges, by shewing their hopes, and their wishes, to have been, that the example of France would be followed in England.—"We hope," said they, in a letter to a club at Rochelle, "to profit *ourselves* from your successful exertions in favour of freedom; and that *an imitation of your splendid actions* may soon enable us to *purify* our own government." *—Again to a club at Langon, they say by their secretary, Mr. Benjamin Cooper,—"*We* think *general* freedom must precede *universal* peace, and that the EXAMPLE *you* have recently given must be IMITATED *throughout the world*, before wars completely cease." †—Adverting to the same subject, in a subsequent letter, they observe:—"Important political changes must *first* take place in *our own* country."—And, that no doubt might be left on the mind of the

* Correspondence of the Revolution Society, &c. p. 100. † Idem. p. 114.

reader as to the nature of the *changes* to which they refer, they allude, at the close of their letter, to certain democratic publications which had recently appeared in England, "Which," say they, "have contributed very considerably to spread among the inhabitants of this island, a more accurate knowledge of the principles of *your* revolution, which only want knowing, *to be imitated.*" * In a letter to the Clubbists of Nantz, who had sent two delegates to England, they vented their spleen against crowned heads, by observing, that, as the objects, as well as the effects, of true religion, "are hardly ever pursued by Princes, it is evident, *that* class of mortals are but poorly instructed in the *genuine* principles either of policy or religion."†—In the same precious effusion of Republican venom, they hail the profligate Mirabeau as the apostle of liberty,—"Mirabeau, the universal friend of freedom and humanity, is no more!"—"His is a name registered in the Archives of Freedom and canonized for the veneration of ages to come."‡ To the reforming patriots of Brest, these enlightened sages exclaim:—"How glorious *an example* have you exhibited, how sublime a lesson have you taught to all mankind!—The heroism which has animated your unparalleled exertions may well strike terror into the hearts of despots, and make every tyrant tremble on his throne.—The period is approaching, when the people in *all* countries will no longer submit to wear that cruel and ignominious yoke of bondage under which they have so long groaned."‖

If these sentiments do not indicate, in the most unequivocal manner, the existence of a wish to follow, and to exhort others to follow, the example of France, by producing a similar revolution in this country, it is difficult to assign to them any signification whatever.—Among the most indefatigable apologists, and the most ardent admirers, of the French patriots, was Dr. Joseph Priestley, a man better known as a polemic than as a philosopher.—In his letters to Mr. Burke, in answer to that statesman's book, he predicts the happiest consequences as sure to flow from the French Revolution. He contemplates, with delight, the blessed period, when the established Church will be extirpated,

* Correspondence of the Revolution Society, p. 126.
† Ibid. p. 152. ‡ Ibid. p. 154. ‖ Ibid. p. 157.

and the clergy, (for "such vermin deserve no mercy,"*) will be destroyed.—And, dwelling with enthusiastic pleasure on "the prospect of the general enlargement of liberty, civil and religious, opened by the revolution in France," he rapturously anticipates the annihilation of *Sovereigns*, of *Lords Bishops*, and *Archbishops*;† and hails the approaching crisis as—

"A consummation devoutly to be wished!"‡

Consistent in his principles, his professions, and his practice, the Doctor resolved, in company with a party of congenial spirits, to the number of ninety, to commemorate the seizure of the Bastille, as the dawn of the French Revolution, on the 14th of July. The *Hotel*, at Birmingham, was the destined scene of these patriotic orgies.—But previous to the meeting, the following seditious hand-bill was circulated by some friend of the parties, whose zeal was evidently more abundant than his judgment.

"My Countrymen,

"The second year of Gallic liberty is nearly expired.—At the "commencement of the third, on the 14th of this month, it is de- "voutly to be wished, that every enemy to civil and religious despo- "tism would give their sanction to the common cause, by a public "celebration of the anniversary.

"Remember—that, on the 14th of July, the Bastille, that high altar "and castle of despotism, fell!—Remember the enthusiasm, peculiar "to the cause of liberty, with which it was attacked!—Remember "that generous humanity that taught the oppressed, groaning under "the weight of insulted rights, to spare the lives of oppressors?—Ex- "tinguish the mean prejudices of nations, and let your members be "collected, and sent as a free-will offering to the National Assembly!— "But is it possible to forget that your own Parliament is venal, your "ministers hypocritical, your clergy legal oppressors; the reigning

* Letters to Mr. Burke, p. 84. † Ibid. p. 151. ‡ Ibid. p. 154.

" family extravagant, the crown of a certain great personage becoming,
" every day, too weighty for the head that wears it,—too weighty for
" the people that gave it; your taxes partial and oppressive; your re-
" presentation a cruel insult upon the sacred rights of property, reli-
" gion, and freedom?—But, on the 14th of this month, prove to the
" sycophants of the day, that you reverence the Olive-branch, that
" you will sacrifice to public tranquillity till the majority shall ex-
" claim:—'*The* PEACE *of Slavery is worse than the* WAR *of Freedom!*'
" —Of that day let tyrants beware!"

As party-spirit ran very high at Birmingham, as the Dissenters were numerous, and, as may be supposed, with Dr. Priestley at their head, not a little clamorous, and as the majority of the inhabitants were firmly attached to the Church and to the King, such a hand-bill could scarcely fail to produce a great fermentation in the town. It was, not very unnaturally, imputed to some of the patriots who were to commemorate the commencement of the French Rebellion; and, accordingly, a considerable number of persons assembled round the house at which they were to meet, and hissed them as they entered. These symptoms of discontent induced the company to depart at a very early hour.—And, after they were gone, the mob became riotous, as mobs generally do, and demolished all the windows in the front of the house, notwithstanding the personal interposition of the magistrates.—On the next day, Friday, July the 15th, the mob assembled in still greater numbers, and, there being no adequate force at hand to oppose them, became ungovernable. They destroyed Dr. Priestley's meeting-house, and dwelling-house, another meeting-house, and several other houses belonging to Dissenters, in the town and neighbourhood. These disgraceful riots continued, from the evening of Thursday to the evening of Sunday, when a party of light-horse, who had marched with incredible rapidity, arrived at Birmingham, to the great joy of the inhabitants of every description. The mob then dispersed, all mischief ceased, tranquillity was restored, and some of the ringleaders were secured.

In an early part of the business, the magistrates had offered a reward of a hundred guineas for the discovery of the author of that in-

flammatory hand-bill, which was the true cause of all those riotous proceedings.—A greater reward was afterwards offered by government, for the same purpose, but without effect. The author was never discovered, so as to subject him to the punishment which he so richly deserved.—Something like *retributive justice*, however, awaited him;—for *his* house was one of those which the mob reduced to ashes.* The rioters, who were apprehended, were put on their trial at the ensuing assizes, and two of them were executed. At Dr. Priestley's house, his philosophical apparatus, his library, and his manuscripts, were destroyed.—The loss, of course, was considerable, and, in some respects, irreparable.—As to his manuscripts, if they merely related to those controversies, in which he had been engaged for the greater part of his life, and which, indeed, appeared to constitute his chief delight, however acute his own feelings might be on the subject, the destruction of them by the flames left nothing for *society* to regret.—Still, the act was atrocious, as all acts of violence are; and its perpetrators richly merited the punishment which they experienced.—The losses sustained by Dr. Priestley, as well as by the other sufferers, from those licentious outrages, were made good by the hundred, in the way which the law directs, and in which all similar losses are made good.—But the jury having made considerable deductions from the Doctor's estimate, the disappointment was borne with less temper than might have been expected from a philosopher, who could coolly contemplate the plunder, and the murder, of hundreds of innocent and virtuous individuals, in a neighbouring country, while the patriots, who thus wreaked their

* It is not one of the least inconveniencies attending the irksome task of writing the history of *present times*, that the author is restrained from giving his authorities for some of the important facts which it becomes his duty to state. He must be a very vain, and a very weak man, who does not experience unpleasant sensations on this account. For it is the duty of an historian, generally speaking, to adduce proofs of the accuracy of his statements, and not to call upon his readers to give him credit for his assertions. In the present case, however, such proof cannot be expected. The reader must, therefore, be left to give what degree of credit he pleases to the assurance, that the name of the author of the inflammatory hand-bill has been known to me for many years;—he lived in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, and absconded immediately after the reward was offered;—as he may possibly have returned to the country, and be still resident in the same neighbourhood, I shall not be more particular in my description.

vengeance upon their unoffending victims, were engaged in accomplishing his own favourite project of national *reform*, and in eradicating "*the evils of hereditary monarchy.*"*—He vented his complaints in a letter which he addressed to the people of Birmingham, and they were echoed by the students of the Unitarian college, at Hackney, and by various ministers of the same sect, in their pulpits. There was a double object in all these unprincipled efforts;—first, to favour the cause of democracy, by decrying the existing institutions of the country;—and, secondly, to hold up the Doctor to the admiration of surrounding nations, as a martyr to the cause of liberty.

The fact is, that Doctor Priestley was a most dangerous subject; all his writings, for years, had a tendency to create dissatisfaction, in the minds of the people, with the existing institutions of the country, and to render them at once infidels and rebels.—What the feelings of his *heart* might be, it is not for a human tribunal to decide; but as he was a man of too much sense, ability, and judgment, not to perceive the *tendency* of his publications, it is impossible not to suspect the honesty of his *motives*.—His object was certainly to overthrow the esta-

* See his answer to the address of "the Republican Natives of Great Britain and Ireland, resident at New York:" quoted by Mr. Cobbett, in his admirable observations on Dr. Priestley's Emigration.—*Porcupine's Works*, Vol. I. p. 171.

The same writer gives the following true account of the issue of Dr. Priestley's action for damages against the hundred.—"The Doctor laid his damages at 4122*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.* of which sum, 420*l.* 15*s.* was for works in manuscript, which," he said, "had been consumed in the flames. The trial of this cause took up nine hours; the jury gave a verdict in his favour, but curtailed the damages to 2502*l.* 18*s.*—It was rightly considered that the imaginary value of the manuscript works ought not to have been included in the damages, because, the Doctor being the author of them, he, in fact, possessed them still, and the loss could be little more than a few sheets of dirty paper.—Besides, if they were to be estimated by those he had published for some years before, their destruction was a benefit, instead of a loss, both to himself and his country.—The sum then of 420*l.* 15*s.* being deducted, the (alleged) damages stood 3701*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*; and it should not be forgotten, that even a great part of this sum was charged for an apparatus of philosophical instruments, which, in spite of the most unpardonable gasconade of the philosopher, can be looked upon as a thing of imaginary value only, and ought not to be estimated at its *cost*, any more than a collection of shells, or insects, or any other of the *frivola* of a virtuoso."—P. 157. It must be remembered, that the jury were upon their *oaths*, and that there existed not the smallest reason for suspecting them of entertaining any undue prejudices to interfere with the rigid discharge of their duty.

blished church, and he had the authority of historical facts for believing that the Throne would not long survive it.—Indeed, *that object* he did not attempt to conceal; and it is therefore no breach of charity, and no violation of justice, to infer that his anxiety to produce the *cause* indicated no aversion from *the effect*. The houses of individuals, of public characters, and even of Romanists, had, before, on various occasions, been demolished by the ungovernable fury of a licentious rabble; but not one of their inhabitants had ever deemed this a sufficient cause for abjuring his country, and for transferring his allegiance to a foreign state. Doctor Priestley's vanity, however, led him to think, or at least to *say*, that his case differed from all others; that he was an object of peculiar persecution; that he was put, as it were, out of the protection of the laws, and that, therefore, Great Britain was no longer worthy to be honoured with his presence. He first sent his son to become a French citizen, and then, after having sounded the alarm-bell as long as he could, and until he found that nobody paid attention to the sound, he emigrated himself, and enrolled his name among the enlightened citizens of the United States of America.—This last act of his life, as an Englishman, was no bad illustration of his former principles and conduct;—he now divided his family between the natural enemies of his country, and those who had successfully rebelled against her.—That country, happily, had neither any subject for regret, in the loss of such a citizen; nor any ground of self-reproach, in the events which immediately occasioned his emigration.—The laws and government, notwithstanding his false assertion to the contrary, afforded him *the same* protection from violence which they either could or would have afforded, under similar circumstances, to any other subject of the realm; and they were enforced against the rioters with *the same* impartial severity with which they would have been enforced against them, had the palace of their King been the object of their attack instead of the houses of the dissenters of Birmingham. The magistracy, too, and many of the clergy, exerted themselves, to the utmost, to suppress the tumult, and to secure the offenders. But the conduct of some of those who suffered from the violence of the mob could not, it is apprehended, be equally free from compunction and self-reproach. The meeting to commemorate

an act of insurrection, rebellion, and murder,—for such was the boasted attack on the Bastille, on the 14th of July, 1789,—was, of itself, a virtual insult to every loyal and well-disposed person, in the town and neighbourhood. Had that never taken place, the riots had never occurred, and the lives of some of his Majesty's subjects would have been spared.—And, again, had not the loyal part of the community been further insulted, by the publication of the seditious hand-bill, which it was impossible not to connect with the persons attending the meeting, the public peace, in all probability, had never been disturbed. —'Tis true, those persons afterwards disavowed the hand-bill, and offered a reward for the apprehension of its author; but this step was not taken till *after* the riots, nor till *after* the author had absconded; and, as he was connected with many of them, it is scarcely credible that they should not have been apprized of his conduct, and of his movements.—At all events, they ought to have disavowed the hand-bill, and to have expressed their abhorrence of it, *before* the meeting; in which case their sincerity would have been exposed to less suspicion. —When these circumstances are duly considered, and when it is further remembered, that Doctor Priestley, and his followers, had been long in the habit of reviling that government, which the great majority of the people respected; of insulting that religion which they revered; and of loosening, as far as they could, all the ties of subordination, and all the bonds of duty, it will probably be inferred, that the Doctor * should have been the last man in the world to complain; and that the populace, *so* irritated, and *so* inflamed, were the objects more of pity than of indignation.

It has been before observed, that, at the beginning of the French Revolution, many persons had been led to admire it from a sincere belief of its tendency to favour the cause of national liberty.—But, whatever reason there might be for entertaining such a belief, at the first meeting of the States-General, the events which had since occur-

* Doctor Priestley rejected some of the fundamental tenets of the Christian faith. He had the audacity to assert, in his answer to Paine's Age of Reason, that "The doctrines of *atonement*, *incarnation*, and *the Trinity*, have no more foundation in the Scriptures, than the doctrine of *transmigration*." If he were sincere in this declaration, he might be a *deist*, but he could not be a *Christian*.

red must have effectually destroyed it.—For a more odious despotism, a more disgusting tyranny, than had been systematically displayed, as well by the National Assembly, as by the different municipal bodies, and by the populace themselves, had not been exhibited even in the worst periods of the monarchy. Whenever any sentiments were broached in the Assembly hostile to the principles, or opinions, of the majority, consisting of the constitutionalists, or adherents of the new constitution, and the jacobins, they were immediately silenced by their clamours; and, in many instances, where the line of argument which the speaker meant to pursue was anticipated, the same clamours, or some pitiful chicane of the lawyers in the Assembly, (a most numerous body!) were employed to deprive him of the privilege of delivering his sentiments.—In short, these champions of liberty, as they so loudly proclaimed themselves to be, totally destroyed all freedom of debate; and no member, who differed from them in opinion, could publicly deliver his sentiments, without exposing his person to imminent danger. The galleries of the Assembly were constantly filled with the emissaries of the jacobins, who hissed or applauded the speakers as they pleased or displeased them, with the same liberty which spectators, *except in France*, generally exercise in a theatre. If the British senators, who openly avowed their admiration of the new-fashioned freedom, now prevalent in France, had experienced similar interruption from the visitors in the gallery of the House of Commons, they would probably have paid little respect to the alleged *sovereignty of the people*, but have moved for the commitment of the offender to prison.—Indeed, the jealousy which these senators have always evinced of their own privileges, and the severity which they have displayed against public writers, who have presumed to impeach the sentiments expressed in their speeches, sufficiently prove, that their admiration of theoretical principles does not extend to the practical application of them to themselves.

The unhappy King of France soon found that his resolution to conform to the new order of things was of no advantage whatever to himself, his family, or friends, as not the smallest respect was paid to the persons or the feelings of any of them. In short, the King was daily the object of insult to the patriots of the Assembly, who seemed to

think that they increased their own consequence in exact proportion as they lowered that of their Sovereign. All the ecclesiastics who refused to take the new oaths, (and to the honour of the French clergy be it recorded, that there were very few of them indeed who did not refuse,) oaths repugnant to their consciences, were not only stripped of their benefices, but were reviled by the populace, and exposed to every species of persecution. Among the few who had taken the oath was the minister of the church of St. Eustace, who had been the King's confessor; but Louis, who was certainly one of the most religious and conscientious men that ever existed, having changed him for another, still had scruples about receiving the sacrament at Easter, at which time all catholics make a point of receiving it, on account of the forced assent to what was called the *civil constitution of the clergy*, which he had suffered to be extorted from him.—Not satisfied with the opinion of the priest who usually attended him, he consulted the Bishop of Clermont on the subject,—and that prelate, in a letter preserved by M. Bertrand de Moleville, advised his Majesty not to receive the sacrament at Easter. This circumstance could have excited neither interest nor attention in ordinary times, but, at the present period, when the factious inhabitants of Paris watched the King's actions with the vigilance of a spy, and with the malice of a fiend, in the hope of discovering something which they might render instrumental to their own treasonable designs, it was made a pretext for fresh attacks upon his liberty, and for fresh assaults upon his person.

The patriots looked forward with impatience to the festival of Easter, when they insisted upon the necessity of the King's affording an unequivocal test of the sincerity of his attachment to the new order of things, by repairing to the parish church, and there receiving the sacrament from the hands of a constitutional priest. Should he refuse, according to their mode of reasoning, he would be perjured, by violating the constitution which he had sworn to maintain,—by betraying the nation, and by placing himself at the head of those priests whom they chose to stigmatize as refractory because they were conscientious; and, if he submitted, they then determined to brand him as a hypocrite and a coward. The King, in order to avoid the mischief which he

foresaw would happen, wisely resolved to pass the Easter-holidays at St. Cloud: as he had recently been very ill, the benefit which his health would receive from the change of air, was the plausible reason alleged for his intended absence from the metropolis;—for, in the regenerated state of this free country, the Sovereign was not at liberty to go from his palace in town to his palace in the country, without the consent and approbation of the mob.—But as his proposed excursion would afford him pleasure, and deprive the jacobins of an opportunity to insult him, it was resolved to prevent it.—A clamour was soon excited, and even the temple of religion itself was profaned by the malevolent invectives of faction. On Palm Sunday, a grenadier of the National Guard, who was stationed at the palace, loudly and violently abused and threatened the King, as the celebration of mass was about to begin, for suffering the service to be performed in the royal chapel by priests who had not taken the new oath. This seditious citizen, who deserved to be shot, and who would, in any other country, have received an exemplary punishment for so flagitious an offence, was loudly applauded by his rebellious comrades, who repeated their imprecations at the door of the chapel, where they created such a disturbance as prevented the commencement of the service till half an hour after the usual time.

The King, naturally considering these insults only as the precursors of more decisive acts of violence, determined to hasten his departure from Paris, and accordingly, about noon, on the Monday in Passion Week, he left the Thuilleries, with the Queen and Royal Family; but they had proceeded a very little way, when their carriage was surrounded by the mob, consisting chiefly of the National Guard, who exclaimed, "*Don't let him pass;—he shall not go!*" These clamours increased at every attempt to proceed; and, to leave no doubt of their murderous intentions, several muskets were seen levelled at the carriage.* The King, who had been too long accustomed to these disgraceful outrages, to be either surprised or shocked when they occurred, calmly sent for La Fayette, and enquired whether it was meant to dispute his right of going to St. Cloud; and desired him to disperse the

* Bertrand's Annals of the French Revolution. Vol. IV. p. 28.

mob. This civic chief answered, that his Majesty was certainly at full liberty to go, and that, in a few moments, the road should be cleared for his carriage. But he soon found that he had lost all his power and influence over these patriotic bands, who, forming a portion of the sovereign people, peremptorily, and consistently, refused to obey any will but their own. He had the mortification of being obliged to acknowledge to the King his inability to make the soldiers obey him; but he gallantly offered to place himself before the King's carriage, with some brave officers, and, at the peril of his life, enforce the execution of the law; but his Majesty, perceiving the impossibility of proceeding, after having been detained on the same spot for an hour and a half, took the prudent resolution of returning to Paris, instead of submitting to the greater disgrace of being carried back to it.

The day after this outrage, the King by the particular desire of his ministers, went to the National Assembly, and told them that he had been unwilling to have recourse to force, in defence of his right of going to St. Cloud, but that, as it was of importance to the nation to prove that he was free, he persisted in his project of going thither: he reminded them that his intentions and his wishes had no other object than the happiness of his people, which could only result from the execution of the laws, and obedience to all the legitimate and constitutional authorities. The president, in his answer, referred to the refractory priests, as the cause of all the troubles,—but did not dare to say one word on the only subject of the King's address—his journey to St. Cloud. Nay, so base and so dastardly were these guardians of their own laws, that, when a member reminded them of this, all the opposition rose in a body to prevent him from continuing his speech, and even threatened to commit him to prison for the attempt!* M. de Cazales, and some others, endeavoured to remonstrate, but they were silenced by the clamours of the majority, who precipitately broke up the session. They were evidently apprehensive of giving offence to the mob, and sacrificed their duty to their fears.—Not, indeed, but that many of them most heartily approved of every attack upon the King,

* Idem. Ibid. p. 36.

by whomever made, and most cordially wished to see him stripped of every vestige of regal authority.

Thus reduced to a state of absolute captivity, with none but nominal rights, which he was not allowed to exercise; a prisoner in his capital, surrounded by a horde of rebels, and by numbers of regicides, without the smallest prospect of improving his condition, and with the best-founded apprehensions for the future, it is not to be wondered at that the King should listen to the suggestions of his real friends, who strenuously urged him to effect his escape from Paris, and to repair to some distant town, where he might assemble all his nobility, and the few troops which still remained faithful to him; under whose protection he might assert his own freedom; dissolve the National Assembly; and convene anew the States-General of the realm. Various places were pointed out, by different persons, as the best for the King's residence; it was at one time intended that he should retire into Normandy;—at another Metz was the place fixed upon;—Besançon was thought the most proper by the Marquis de Bouillè, in whom the King, very wisely, reposed the greatest confidence; but his Majesty himself preferred Montmedi, and M. de Bouillè received instructions to adopt the necessary means for securing his escape. This was settled at the close of the year 1790; but the King having, in the mean time, succeeded in buying the great hero of the Revolution, Mirabeau, whose avarice and ambition prevailed over every other passion, sentiment, and feeling, the plan was altered. The price of Mirabeau's conversion and support, which he had actually received, was a sum of twenty-five thousand pounds, and a monthly allowance of something more than two thousand.* The plan which he proposed, was to procure the dissolution of the National Assembly, and the liberty of the King, by the power and the will of the nation itself; establishing as a principle, that the representatives of the people, in this Assembly, were not possessed of the powers necessary to make a change in the existing constitution; such a measure being contrary to the instructions given by all the provinces to their deputies whom they sent to the States-General, which instruc-

* Memoirs relating to the French Revolution, by the Marquis de Bouillè. p. 277.

tions had neither been altered nor revoked; and that the King, being deprived of his personal liberty, could not give the sanction of his authority to the new laws which they had passed.—The validity of this objection being once admitted, he next intended to procure addresses from the different departments, praying that the present Assembly might be dissolved, a new Assembly convoked, with the powers requisite for making such alterations in the constitution as should appear necessary; and that the King should be restored to his liberty, and to the enjoyment of a reasonable authority. These addresses were to be supported by the people of Paris, whom Mirabeau thought he could command, after he should have succeeded in removing some of the leaders of the jacobin faction whom he had already denounced to the Assembly.*

Mirabeau relied principally, for the success of his scheme, on his ability to direct the conduct of six and thirty departments; and M. de Bouillè was certain of six more;—besides, at this period, most of the departments were favourably disposed to the monarchy. It was Mirabeau's intention to deliver the King, and Royal Family, to M. de Bouillè, either at Compiegne or at Fontainbleau, where that officer would have surrounded them with the best troops which he had under his command. When this plan was communicated to M. de Bouillè, he expressed his entire approbation of it, and recommended the King to give it the preference over all others.

La Fayette having a suspicion that Mirabeau was engaged in something which might frustrate his own plans, (if a man so weak, so unsteady, so frivolous, and so versatile, could be said to have any thing like a plan,) sought an interview with him. They had a conversation, which lasted three hours, in which each endeavoured to sift the other, and to discover his views;—but, as might be supposed, perfectly without success. At another interview, which had previously taken place between them, for the purpose of promoting a reconciliation, Mirabeau having proposed the adoption of some very strong measure, which, to him, appeared necessary, La Fayette started and exclaimed, "Nay,

* Idem. Ibid. p. 278-9.

Mr. de Mirabeau, it is impossible that a man of honour can have recourse to such means."—" A man of honour!" replied Mirabeau, " Ah! M. de la Fayette, I perceive that you would be a *Grandison Cromwell;*—you'll see where such a mixture will lead you."—On a similar occasion, La Fayette having complained bitterly of the atrocious designs upon him, which were formed by his enemies, and even by Mirabeau himself, Mirabeau called upon him to explain what he meant. "Well then," said La Fayette, " I will tell you, since you force me to it, that I was thoroughly acquainted with your intention of having me assassinated."—" I, Sir?"—" Yes, Sir, in such a place, on such a day, at such an hour; I was sure of it?"—" You were sure of it?—You were sure of it, M. de la Fayette, and I am still alive!—What a good creature you are!—And you think of taking the leading part in a revolution!"*—This short conversation displays the real and opposite characters of the two men, in a strong point of view.

Such a man as Mirabeau was well calculated for ensuring success to any plan which he undertook to execute;—and, notwithstanding the many and serious obstacles which he would have had to encounter in his project, for releasing the King from the disgraceful bondage in which he was now kept, it is not improbable that he would have succeeded. But Providence had otherwise ordained; for, at this critical period, Mirabeau died.† A few minutes before his dissolution, when his friends were lamenting his fate, he said to them—" My friends, it is not for me you have to weep, but for the monarchy, which descends with me to the grave." These were the truest words which he ever uttered. He had too much sagacity not to perceive the danger to which the monarchy was exposed, and was too well acquainted with the public characters of the times, not to know that, under existing circumstances, he was the only man who could rescue it from destruction. The remains of this extraordinary man were accompanied to the grave by the National Assembly, the King's Ministers, the Municipal Body,

* Bertrand's Annals, &c. Vol. III. p. 393.—Note.

† On the 6th of March, 1791.—His death was immediately occasioned by violent internal spasms; but these were said to be produced by excessive drinking, to which he was much addicted, and in which he had very lately indulged.

the National Guard, the regular troops, the members of the Jacobin Club, and by nearly the whole population of Paris, and its neighbourhood. The procession began at five o'clock in the afternoon, and it was near midnight before the ceremony was finished. The sorrow at his death was as sincere as it was universal;—though proceeding from totally different motives and causes. To the King it was a serious calamity, as it deprived him of almost the only means which now remained for the recovery of some reasonable portion of his lost authority. Had Mirabeau's integrity been equal to his talents, the monarchy had never been reduced to that state of degradation from which it was at last, his intention to extricate it. With his commanding force of eloquence, and with the strength of his intellectual powers, he might have arrested the revolutionary torrent in its course; he might have kept the States-General within the strict line of their duty; and, while he had clipped the wings of despotism, he might have fixed the regal authority upon a firm and permanent basis. But Mirabeau was profligate, vicious, and unprincipled;—avarice and ambition were the predominant features in his character; the former, however, was not with him the medium of accumulation, but, like the latter, the instrument and the means of enjoyment. He was a sensualist, and a voluptuary; corrupt in principle, and licentious from habit. Still, even his vices might have been rendered instrumental, in the hands of an able statesman, to the preservation of the monarchy. And had the Marquis de Bouillè been minister, instead of Mr. Neckar, at the commencement of the Revolution, or at the first meeting of the States-General, Mirabeau might have become the advocate of Louis the Sixteenth, and the French monarchy might have been saved.

The King of France now reverted to his former plan of retiring to Montmedi; and the Marquis de Bouillè again received orders to prepare for his reception. Meantime it was deemed expedient to ascertain, as far as possible, the precise views of the neighbouring powers, and particularly of the Emperor of Germany, who, as well from affection to the Queen of France, his sister, as from the contiguity of his dominions to the French territory, might naturally be supposed to take the deepest interest in the fate of the illustrious captives. Count Alphonse de

Durfort was the person appointed to confer with the Emperor on the subject. That nobleman, accordingly, left Paris at the end of April, and, on the 20th of May, had an interview with the Emperor at Mantua, accompanied by M. de Calonne, and M. Descars. The Count returned to Paris, in safety, on the 28th of May; and laid before the King the result of his conference at Mantua. The Emperor engaged to send 35,000 men to the frontiers of Flanders and Hainault; 15,000 troops, of the German circles, were to proceed to Alsace; the same number of Swiss were to make their appearance on the frontiers of the Lyonnois and Franche Comtè; the King of Sardinia was to send 15,000 men to the borders of Dauphinè; and the King of Spain had promised to threaten the Southern provinces of France with an army of 20,000 men. To these troops, amounting to 100,000, were to be added all the French regiments which still preserved their fidelity to their King; all the armed volunteers, who were well disposed, and all those who were discontented with the new order of things.—The Emperor professed to be assured of the favourable disposition of the King of Prussia, and of the Elector of Hanover. All these preparations were to be ready by the end of July, when a declaration from all the Princes, and members, of the House of Bourbon, not in France, was to be published; and immediately after the manifesto of the coalesced powers was to appear. The Emperor strenuously advised the King not to think of leaving Paris, but, on the approach of the hostile armies, to be prepared, on the intreaties of his people, to offer his mediation.*

Such was the substance of the Emperor's project, for restoring the King of France to liberty and power. Louis the Sixteenth expressed his conviction, that the meliorated constitution which he had himself proposed to the States-General, on the memorable 23d of June, should, at all events, be established; and the Queen expressed her decided repugnance to a longer residence at Paris, though she maintained the impropriety of quitting the dominions of France. The means proposed by the Emperor were neither wisely selected, nor fully adequate,

* Bertrand's Annals, Vol. IV. p. 73, 74.

to the object which he proposed to accomplish. He had not sufficiently studied the state of the public mind in France, nor the nature and tendency of the popular passions and prejudices.

As to the projected escape, the King had fixed different periods for carrying it into execution; but his wavering and unsettled mind, and his natural repugnance to the adoption of any decisive measure, led him still to protract and postpone his departure until a period the least favourable for the success of such a step. At the latter end of the year 1790, or in the first months of the present year, it might, and probably would, have succeeded to the utmost of his wishes: for many of the troops were yet unseduced by the principles of Jacobinism, and uncorrupted by the bribes of the Duke of Orleans; but, in the course of the spring, a material change, for the worse, had taken place in the minds and conduct of the soldiery, whom the Assembly had authorized, by a special decree, to attend the debates at the Jacobin Clubs, and whom the agents of the Duke of Orleans had succeeded in debauching, by the profuse distribution of money and of liquor.—The King, however, appeared to pay no attention to these circumstances, all obvious and most material as they were; and even to the last moment his indecision remained, and, indeed, contributed not a little to the ultimate failure of his plan. The road pointed out to him by M. de Bouillè, he refused to take, and persisted in following another, which he was desired to avoid, for the very strong reason that it would not supply post-horses at every stage, and that, consequently, it would be necessary to supply the deficiency, by sending horses, which could not fail to create suspicion, and to excite vigilance. The King also persisted in his resolution to travel, with his family, in a travelling coach which had been constructed for the purpose, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrances of M. de Bouillè, who represented to him, that a carriage of peculiar construction was especially calculated to attract general observation. The Marquis, at length, received his final instructions from the King, who fixed his departure for the night of the 19th of June; and desired, that detachments of troops might be posted on different parts of the road, to be ready to assist him in case of need. His instructions were, of course, obeyed; but, on the.

15th of June, after all the orders had been given, and all the precautions adopted, M. de Bouillè was informed, that his Majesty would not leave Paris till the night of the 20th. In short, incredible as it is, it appears as if the King thought that, in an escape of this nature, which required many complicated machines to be put in motion, in order to ensure even a probability of its success, no more precaution was necessary, than in an excursion of pleasure from Paris to Saint Cloud!—M. de Bouillè had sent the Marquis D'Agoult, major of the French guards, a man of talents, integrity, and courage, who was perfectly acquainted with the road, to ride with the King, in his carriage, and, at once, to serve him as a guide, and a protector. But, posterity will scarcely credit the fact, that a personage so truly important as this nobleman was on such an occasion, was prevented from taking his destined place, by the obstinate vanity of a foolish woman; a Madame de Tourzel, who claimed her *right* of accompanying the royal children, to whom she was governess!

The event of this attempt is well-known. On the night of the King's departure, M. de la Fayette was seen crossing the Carousel, where the carriage destined for the King was waiting; at the moment when the Queen, and the Dauphin, who followed the King, arrived, he was seen to pass a second time; and there seems to be good reason for believing that he had strong suspicions of the King's intention, if he were not absolutely apprized of the fact. The harness of his Majesty's coach broke upon the road; an accident, the possibility of which common prudence would have foreseen and provided against, and he was detained two hours, at one place, while it was repaired. Some of the officers, whom M. de Bouillè had sent with the detachments of troops, because the King did not arrive at their posts at the expected hour, chose to infer that he would not come, and, most inexcusably, withdrew their men. In short, one act of imprudence succeeded another; blunder on blunder was committed; his Majesty was stopped on his arrival at Varennes, about half-past eleven at night; the few troops stationed there, refused to obey their officers; and, about seven in the morning, an aide-de-camp to La Fayette, arrived, and compelled the King to return immediately to the capital. An

unaccountable delay took place in apprizing M. de Bouillè of these facts; and when he was informed of them, it was too late to repair the evil.

As the consternation of the National Assembly was great, at the news of the King's escape, so was their exultation on receiving the intelligence of his return, which reached them in the evening of the 22d of June. —A republican spirit now began to display itself in the most unequivocal manner. The trial, and deposition of the King, were subjects of conversation and debate in the metropolis; and the Assembly passed decrees, by which they virtually stripped him of the little portion of authority which their mongrel-constitution had assigned to him; and arrogated all the essentials of the executive power to themselves. The palace of the Thuilleries was now, literally, a prison, and La Fayette the gaoler; who, with all the meanness of a little mind, added insult to injury, and directed that no persons, but such as had his orders, should be admitted to the royal presence, extending his prohibition even to the members of the Assembly!

A faithful delineation of the state of the kingdom, at this critical period, was contained in one of the declarations of the loyal members of the National Assembly, who, since the King's return to Paris, had taken scarcely any part in their discussions, and had generally observed a mournful silence. "In the midst," said they, "of the insults offered to the Monarch, and to his august family, what has the monarchy become? The National Assembly have concentrated in themselves the whole regal authority;—the great seal has been laid upon their table; —their decrees are to be put in execution without the sanction of the Crown;—they give direct orders to all the agents of the executive power;—they cause oaths to be administered in their name, in which Frenchmen no longer find even the name of their King;—commissioners, appointed by them alone, are going through the provinces to administer the oaths which they exact, and to give orders to the army.—Thus at the very moment when the inviolability of the sacred person of the Monarch was annihilated, the monarchy was destroyed;

even the appearance of royalty no longer exists: a republican *interregnum* is substituted in its stead.

" Far be it," continued these consistent defenders of the constitutional rights of the Crown, " from those who know the rules of our conduct, and we dare hope that there are few Frenchmen who are not satisfied with them, to imagine that we could have consented to those decrees.—They are not only repugnant to our principles, but grievous to our hearts; never did we more painfully feel the rigours of our duty, or more lament the fatal consequences drawn from the trust delegated to us, than when we were compelled to witness acts which we considered as criminal outrages;—than when our principal speakers, become timid for the first time, were compelled to observe a profound silence, that they might not involve a cause so sacred in the contumely which our adversaries have but too well succeeded in casting upon us. Until the present disastrous period we could embrace, at least, the phantom of the monarchy;—we fought to preserve its relics;—and the hope of preserving it justified our endeavours. Now, the last blow has been given to the monarchy; but, deprived of these motives, duties of another kind present themselves. The Monarch exists;—he is a captive! It is for the interest of the King we must rally; it is for him, for his family, for the loved blood of the *Bourbons*, that we should remain at our post, and watch over so precious a deposit.—We will, therefore, still perform this sacred duty, which alone must be our excuse; and we will thus prove that, in our hearts, the Monarch and the Monarchy are inseparable.

" But," pursued these worthy gentlemen, " while we perform this urgent duty, our constituents must not expect us to interfere with any subject of a different nature. When one interest can alone force us to sit with those who have erected an irregular republic on the ruins of the monarchy, to that interest we shall exclusively devote ourselves. From this moment a profound silence, on whatever does not relate to it will mark our sorrow, and be, at the same time, the only mark of our constant opposition to all the decrees of the Assembly.—Conse-

quently, we shall continue, from the sole motive of not abandoning the interests of the King, and of the Royal Family, to attend the deliberations of the National Assembly; but, as we cannot approve their principles, nor acknowledge the lawfulness of their decrees, we shall henceforth take no part in discussions which do not relate solely to those interests which it is our determination to defend."

This declaration, which was signed by two hundred and ninety members, the majority of the National Assembly would not suffer to be read! In the month of July, Pethion uttered a violent philippic, in the Assembly, against the inviolability of the Sovereign, and moved that he should be arraigned and tried. Although this motion was in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of the new constitution, it was nevertheless favourably received by the Jacobins in the Assembly, and was discussed on two successive days.—It was, however, ultimately rejected; but its rejection became the pretext for exciting the mob to fresh acts of outrage; and Mr. Brissot, who now began to make himself conspicuous, *read* a speech at the Jacobin Club, inculcating the same principles there which Pethion had already laboured to enforce in the National Assembly; which speech was printed and circulated throughout the country, which was deluged with republican pamphlets. The Assembly, which, in innumerable instances had greatly exceeded its powers, and which, indeed, would suffer no bounds to be prescribed to its authority, even suffered a petition of the rabble to be read at their bar, in which their Sovereign was openly branded as *a perjured traitor!* Indeed, they had been so much accustomed to talk treason themselves, that it would have ill become them to punish others for exercising the same freedom.

In the month of September, the constitutional labours of the Assembly were completed, and the precious code of anarchy, which they had formed, was submitted to the unconditional acceptance of their imprisoned Monarch. On the 13th of that month the unhappy Louis declared his acquiescence, in a letter, which he afterwards confirmed in person, when he took the oath prescribed by the Assembly; and,

on the 30th of September, 1791, the Assembly itself was dissolved; having, in less than three years, abolished institutions, and destroyed a monarchy, which had subsisted for ages.

By this unconditional acceptance of the new constitution, the King of France afforded a pretext to the Emperor of Germany, and the other confederated powers, who had undertaken to interfere for the purpose of restoring him to liberty, but who in fact, were extremely averse from the adoption of hostile and decisive measures, to depart from the *conditional* obligations which they had imposed on themselves in the memorable declaration of *Pilnitz*. No public transaction has been the subject of more calumny, or of greater misrepresentation, than the declaration in question,—though nothing could be more justifiable in its object, nor more simple in its nature. The Emperor and the King of Prussia, having some state-matters of importance to settle, resolved to do it in person;—and, for this purpose they met at the castle of Pilnitz, on the 25th of August. Here, the Count d'Artois and M. de Calonne had an interview with their Majesties, when it was determined, that a declaration should be drawn up, expressive of their sense of the situation in which the King of France was placed, and of the means necessary for restoring to him the power of thinking and of acting for himself, freely and without danger. This declaration was finally settled on the evening of the 27th of August, in the presence of the Emperor of Germany, the King of Prussia, the Count d'Artois, Marshal de Lacy, M. de Calonne, M. Spielmann, and M. Bischofswerder. The declaration stated, that the Emperor, and the King of Prussia, having heard the desires and the representations of MONSIEUR, and his royal highness the Count *d'Artois*, declared conjointly, that they considered the situation in which the King of France was then placed, as a matter which concerned the interest of every Sovereign in Europe; they expressed a hope that that interest would not fail to be acknowledged by the powers whose assistance was required; and that, consequently, they would not refuse to employ, in conjunction with their Majesties, the most efficacious means, according to their abilities, for putting the King of France in a situa-

tion to establish, in perfect liberty, the foundations of a monarchical government, equally agreeable to the rights of Sovereigns and the welfare of the French; *then, and in that case*, their Majesties were determined to act promptly, and by mutual consent, with the forces necessary to obtain the end proposed by all of them; and, in the meantime, they would give orders for their troops to be ready for actual service.

As the *condition* of carrying this plan into effect was the co-operation of all the leading powers of the continent, and as that co-operation was not obtained, it followed, of course, that the declaration itself remained a mere nullity. It is evident, from the whole tenour of it, that the monarchs who signed it entertained no hostile disposition, and cherished no hostile designs, against France. Had such been the case, they would, it is conceived, have prepared a declaration, couched in different terms, and have forborne to make it public, until their armies had entered the French territories. It is not, indeed, either customary or natural, for Sovereigns to apprize the objects of their attack of their intention to assail them; and hence it is manifest, that the declaration of Pilnitz was published rather with the hope of inducing the National Assembly to change the situation of the King themselves, than with any serious thought or expectation of producing that change by force. The declaration itself, though professed to be worded with great caution, is highly objectionable; it avows a resolution to put the King of France in a situation *to establish the foundation of a monarchical government*, in a kingdom where a monarchy had been established for fourteen centuries!—Here was a tacit admission of the right of the National Assembly, in express contradiction both to the nature of their delegated trust, and to the positive instructions of their constituents, to subvert and abolish the ancient monarchy of France.—It would, indeed, have been unwise, and perhaps dangerous to the personal safety of Louis the Sixteenth, to avow a wish to restore the King to all his former plenitude of power;—but it would have been both politic and proper to avoid all expressions which could fairly be construed into an acknowledgment of an imaginary right, the existence of which

would render every throne in Europe insecure. The occasion did not call for any such expression as that used in the declaration; and it might have been otherwise worded, without any such admission on the one hand, and without any detriment to the object in view, on the other.—The objectionable passage might have been thus changed: "To employ the most efficacious means to put the King of France in a situation to establish, in perfect liberty, the monarchical constitution of the realm, with such modifications, restrictions, and provisions, as shall fix, on a permanent basis, the lawful rights of the Sovereign, and the constitutional freedom of the subject." Such a declaration would have embraced every object which the associated monarchs professed to have in view, without affording the smallest sanction, either expressed or implied, to the revolutionary doctrines, or the smallest ground of apprehension, that any intention existed to establish a despotic government in France.

The declaration, however, was not known to Louis the Sixteenth sufficiently soon to alter his intentions respecting the new constitution; nor is it, indeed probable that it would have produced such an effect, had it been communicated to him at an earlier period. The letter of his two brothers, which is much more energetic than the declaration itself, and to which the declaration was annexed, was not written till the 10th of September.—The King's acceptance of the new constitution destroyed the object of the declaration, and put a stop to all the preparations for carrying it into effect.

It is to be observed, that, neither in the conference holden at Mantua, nor in that which preceded the declaration of Pilnitz, was the smallest intimation given, that the British government would take a part in any of the measures which the continental powers might think proper to adopt for the personal safety of the French King, or for the security of their own dominions, against the principles and example of the revolutionists in France. At Mantua, the Emperor of Germany expressly declared, in the written document, which was to be laid before Louis the Sixteenth, "The *neutrality* of England may be relied

on."*—Whence it is apparent, that he had rather apprehended the hostility of England, than entertained hopes of her co-operation and support.—At Pilnitz, not the smallest allusion appears to have been made to this country; and, indeed, it is perfectly clear, from a passage in the letter, which MONSIEUR and the Count *d'Artois* addressed to their Royal Brother, that the British minister had not the smallest intention of interfering, directly or indirectly, with the internal concerns of France.—"There is no reason to fear," said the Princes, "that the British nation, too generous to frustrate what it knows to be just, too enlightened not to desire what is material to her own tranquillity, will oppose the views of this noble and irresistible confederacy."† Mr. Pitt, indeed, as his public conduct gave reason to infer, was not yet sufficiently alive to the dangers resulting from the dissemination of revolutionary principles, and from the contemplation of revolutionary practices. A firm friend to the liberty of the subject, in every state, it was believed, he still hoped that the violent changes which had taken place in France might give way to a more sober and rational system of conduct; that the popular commotions which prevailed in that country might subside into a national calm; and that, at all events, the French government would be sufficiently occupied, with the means of confirming and consolidating the new order of things, not to have leisure, however disposed, for the invasion of the neighbouring states, and for the interruption of the general tranquillity.—His high notions of national independence were supposed to render him averse from all interposition in the internal concerns of foreign nations, and resolute not to interfere with the affairs of France, without the existence of a clear and paramount necessity.—He could not fail, too, to perceive, that there was a strong and violent party formed in this country in favour of the French Revolution, and not only enthusiastically attached to the abstract principles upon which it was founded, but evidently solicitous for their practical application to all other governments, not excepting their own. When to those powerful motives was superadded an anxious desire to improve the internal resources of the country, to extend her commerce,

* Bertrand's Annals, Vol. IV. p. 72. † Idem. Ibid. Vol. IV. Appendix, p. 162.

to reduce her taxes, and to diminish her debts, the sincerity of Mr. Pitt's wishes for the preservation of peace, and, consequently, of his forbearance to enter into any confederacy of the continental powers, for a forcible interference in behalf of the French Monarch, can neither excite wonder, nor justify disbelief.

Mr. Burke, who appreciated, better than any man, the nature of the new French principles, their tendency, and their effect, thus represented them to his countrymen, at this period.—"The political dogma, which, upon the new French system, is to unite the factions of different nations, turns on this; 'That the majority, told by the head, of taxable people in every country, is the perpetual, natural, unceasing, indefeasible, sovereign; that this majority is perfectly master of the form, as well as the administration, of the state; and that the magistrates, under whatever names they are called, are only functionaries to obey the orders (general as laws, or particular as decrees) which that majority may make; that this is the only natural government; that all others are tyranny and usurpation.'

"In order to reduce this dogma into practice, the republicans in France, and their associates in other countries, make it always their business, and often their public profession, to destroy all traces of ancient establishments, and to form a new commonwealth in each country, upon the basis of the French *Rights of Men*.—On the principle of these rights, they mean to institute, in every country, and, as it were, the germe of the whole, parochial governments, for the purpose of what they call equal representation. From them is to grow, by some media, a general council and representative of all the parochial governments.—In that representative is to be vested the whole national power, totally abolishing the hereditary name and office; levelling all conditions of men, (except where money *must* make a difference;) breaking all connection between territory and dignity, and abolishing every species of nobility, gentry, and church establishments; all their priests, and all their magistrates, being only creatures of election, and pensioners at will.

"Knowing how opposite a permanent landed interest is to that scheme, they have resolved, and it is the great drift of all their regulations, to reduce that description of men to a mere peasantry, for the sustenance of the towns; and to place the true effective government in cities, among the tradesmen, bankers, and voluntary clubs of bold, presuming young persons; advocates, attorneys, notaries, managers of newspapers, and those cabals of literary men, called academics. Their republic is to have a first functionary (as they call him) under the name of king, or not, as they think fit. This officer, when such an officer is permitted, is, however, neither in fact nor name, to be considered as sovereign, nor the people as his subjects.—The very use of these appellations is offensive to their ears.

"This system, as it has first been realized, dogmatically as well as practically, in France, makes France the natural head of all factions, formed on a similar principle, wherever they may prevail, as much as Athens was the head and settled ally of all democratic factions, wherever they existed. The other system has no head.

"This system has very many partisans in every country in Europe, *particularly in England*, where they are already formed into a body, comprehending most of the dissenters of the three leading denominations; to these are readily aggregated all who are dissenters in character, temper, and disposition, though not belonging to any of their congregations;—that is, all the restless people who resemble them, of all ranks and all parties—Whigs, and even Tories;—the whole race of half-bred speculators;—all the Atheists, Deists, and Socinians;—all those who hate the clergy, and even the nobility;—a good many among the married people;—the East Indians, almost to a man, who cannot bear to find that their present importance does not bear a proportion to their wealth.—These latter have united themselves into one great, and, in my opinion, formidable club,* which, though now

* "Originally called the Bengal Club, but since opened to persons from the other Presidencies, for the purpose of consolidating the whole Indian interest."

quiet, may be brought into action with considerable unanimity and force.*"

This is a pretty accurate account of the state of the public mind, both in England and France, at the close of the year 1791, as far as it was affected by the influence of revolutionary principles.

* *Thoughts on French Affairs*, inserted in the third volume of Mr. Burke's Work, the quarto edition. p. 16, 18.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Opening of the Session of Parliament—Speech from the Throne—Motion for the Address opposed by Mr. Fox—Applies to himself a passage in the Speech—Condemns the interference of Government in the negotiation between Russia and the Porte—Is supported by Mr. Grey—Answered by Mr. Pitt, who imputes the failure of that interference to the arts of Opposition—Mr. Pitt opens the budget for the year 1792—Prosperous state of the Finances—Proposes the repeal of the taxes on female servants; on carts and waggons; on small houses, and on candles—His philosophical investigation of the causes of National Prosperity—Debate on the Lottery—Motion for the gradual abolition of the Slave-Trade carried—New System of Police introduced—Discussion on the Subject; its beneficial effects demonstrated by experience, in the diminution of the number of capital punishments. —Society of Friends of the People—Names of some of its Members—Established for the avowed purpose of procuring a reform in Parliament—Mr. Grey, a member of this Society, gives notice, in the House, of a motion proposed to be made in the next Session for a Parliamentary Reform—Mr. Pitt's speech on the occasion—Deprecates the discussion at such a time, and points out its evil effects—Declares his own sentiments on the question—Avows a change in his opinions—Explains its cause and nature—Expresses his resolution to oppose all wild attempts at innovation—Is answered by Mr. Fox, who vindicates the New Society—The Society censured by Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham—Approved by Mr. Sheridan—Danger of such attempts at this period—Democratic publications—The people asserted to be the sole source of power, and the only legitimate founders of Government—Consequences of this doctrine, as applied to the British Monarchy—System of Representation reviled, and the House of Commons libelled—Similar opinions advanced by another writer on the French Revolution—Appearance of the second part of Paine's Rights of Man—The London Corresponding Society—Dissemination of dangerous principles—Mr. Pitt's repugnance to coercive measures—Cause of that repugnance—Is subdued by the very principle which gave birth to it—He resolves to issue a Proclamation against the seditious Societies—Copy of it previously shewn to the leaders of the Whig Party—Mr. Fox's motion in favour of the Unitarians—Supported on abstract principles—Opposed by Mr. Burke, who reprobates such a mode of argument—Points out the dangerous principles and conduct of the Unitarians—comments on their proceedings at a late meeting—Remarks on the speech of Doctor Towers at the Unitarian meeting—Mr. William Smith avows himself an Unitarian, defends the Society, declares them to be unconnected with all other Societies, and pronounces them to be the firm friends of Government—The motion opposed by Mr. Pitt—Rejected by the House—Mr. Whitbread's motion on the Birmingham riots—His panegyric on the Dissenters—His censure of the Magistrates—Mr. Dundas answers him, and

exculpates the Magistrates—Motion rejected—Object of the motion—Mr. William Smith's assertions, respecting the Unitarians disproved by authentic documents—Chauvelin's irregular correspondence with Lord Grenville on the King's Proclamation—Falsehood of Mr. Chauvelin's statement demonstrated—Is properly reproved by Lord Grenville—Debates on the Proclamation in the House of Commons—Address—Opposed by Mr. Grey, who proposes an Amendment—Proclamation condemned by the Opposition—Mr. Grey's virulent invective against Mr. Pitt—Treated with contempt by the Minister—Address supported by Lord North, and other members of the Whig Party—Carried—Debates on the same Subject in the House of Lords—Speech of the Prince of Wales in support of the Address—The Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, and other Peers of the same Party, vote with the Ministers—The Lords concur in the Address—Mr. Pitt wishes for an Union of Parties—Strange conduct of Lord Thurlow in the House of Lords—Opposes Mr. Pitt's Revenue-Bill, and abuses the authors of it—Opposes the New Forest Timber-Bill—Charges the Ministers with having betrayed their Sovereign—Is answered by Lord Grenville—Mr. Pitt's representation to the King—Parliament prorogued—The Great Seal taken from Lord Thurlow—Mr. Pitt makes overtures to the leaders of the Whig Party—They fail through the arrogant pretensions of Mr. Fox—Remarks on Mr. Fox's conduct on this occasion—State of the Ministry—Political character of Lord Thurlow.

[1792.] The Parliament was opened by the King on the last day of January. In the speech from the Throne, not the smallest allusion was made to the situation of France. The treaties of peace between the Emperor of Germany and the Turks, and between the Empress of Russia and the Turks, were mentioned, and a hope expressed, that tranquillity would soon be restored to the British possessions in the East. His Majesty observed, that the friendly assurances which he received from foreign powers, and the general state of affairs in Europe, appeared to promise, to his subjects, the continuance of their present tranquillity. And this consideration led him to think that some immediate reduction might safely be made in our naval and military establishments.* The speech concluded with an appropriate and seasonable eulogy on the British constitution. It was truly observed, that the continued and progressive prosperity of the country must operate as the strongest encouragement to a spirit of useful industry, among all classes of the community; and, above all, must confirm and increase their steady and zealous attachment to that constitution, which had been found, by long experience, to unite the in-

* The speech also announced the marriage of the Duke of York with the eldest daughter of the King of Prussia, which had been celebrated at the close of the preceding year.

estimable blessings of liberty and order, and to which, under the favour of Providence, all our other advantages were principally to be ascribed.

The motion for the usual address to the King was strongly combated by the opposition, whose censures of the conduct of ministers were principally directed to their interference in the negotiation between Russia and Turkey. Mr. Fox, in particular, accused them of having acted, on that occasion, neither with honour nor with delicacy; and complimented the minority on the resistance of that measure against which the voice of the nation spoke so loudly; a measure, however, most wise and politic, and the failure of which was solely imputable to his own unconstitutional and most unjustifiable conduct. He considered the praise of the British constitution, contained in the speech from the Throne, as conveying an indirect censure upon himself and his friends, as not sufficiently convinced of its freedom from all defects and imperfections, and as imputing disloyalty to every one who wished for a reformation of abuses. But he disclaimed all desire of imitating those who had overturned a constitution so radically bad as that of France, and who had *justly* run all hazards to destroy it. The constitution of Great Britain was, on the contrary, fundamentally good, and merited, therefore, the efforts of all honest and loyal subjects to preserve it. It was unjust, then, he contended, to insinuate that those who approved of the destruction of despotism in France, would rejoice in the downfall of the British constitution.

Why the imputation of our national prosperity to the blessings of our free constitution should be considered by Mr. Fox, and his friends, as an implied censure upon their principles, is not very easy to conceive. And the extraordinary sensibility displayed on this occasion, the eagerness to enter on a defence where no attack was made, was well-calculated to excite suspicions where they had not before existed.

Mr. Fox next adverted to the riots at Birmingham, censured the magistrates, condemned the populace, panegyrised Dr. Priestley, and represented the whole body of Dissenters as staunch friends to the

constitution, and zealous in its defence! The censures of other members of the opposition, particularly those of Mr. Grey, extended to the hopes held out in the speech of the speedy termination of hostilities in the East, which he stigmatized as delusive and unfounded. Mr. Dundas, however, shewed that they were fully justified by the actual state of affairs in that country, which he represented as most prosperous.

Mr. Pitt defended the speech against every attack; and justified the conduct of ministers, in respect to the differences between Russia and the Porte. Their object had been the preservation of that balance between the different powers which was essential to the security of the whole. And, had no unexpected and improper obstruction been thrown in his way, Mr. Pitt maintained that the negotiation which he had undertaken would have been brought to a successful issue; but the popular clamour which had been industriously excited against it, and the unseasonable opposition which he had experienced, encouraged Russia to resist the demands of the British government, and caused the negotiation to fail. What that opposition was has already been shewn, but it required more than ordinary confidence to renew the subject at this period, and to make such unconstitutional conduct the theme of discussion, and a matter of boast. A majority of one hundred and fifteen gave their sanction to the address. Still the opposition were not discouraged by this rebuff. It was a thing so new to them to have the voice of the nation with them upon any one topic, that they seemed resolved to make the most of it. They accordingly renewed the debates on the Russian armament, its object, and destination, several times in the course of the two following months, and even censured Mr. Pitt for that failure which they knew to be solely imputable to the intrigues of Mr. Fox, and his ambassador, Mr. Adair. Mr. Pitt repelled the charges preferred against him, and defended his conduct on the same grounds which he had before advanced, in similar discussions; and all the motions of his opponents were lost by decisive majorities.

On the 17th of February, Mr. Pitt laid his annual statement of the

finances of the country before the House of Commons, in one of the longest and most able speeches which he had ever delivered on a similar occasion.—The first point to which he called the attention of the committee, was the probable amount of the future income of the country. The produce of the permanent taxes in the year ending on the 5th of January, 1792, he stated to be 14,132,000*l.*; which, with the addition of 2,558,000*l.* (the average amount of the land and malt taxes), made the total revenue of the year 16,690,000*l.*; to which an addition of 40,000*l.* from the produce of certain temporary taxes, was to be made, increasing the total to 16,730,000*l.* This sum was shewn, by statements produced to the House, to exceed the average produce of the *four* preceding years by half a million; of the *two* preceding years by 100,000*l.*;—and of the *three* preceding years, as well as the produce of the year immediately preceding, by 300,000*l.* Mr. Pitt proposed to rest his computation on the average sum of four years, being 16,212,000*l.* which might, in his opinion, be safely assumed, as not being likely to exceed the permanent annual revenue of the country.

He then proceeded to state the amount of the annual expenditure, with some additions, on the one hand, since the last calculation, for a provision for some of the younger branches of the Royal Family, and for the government of Upper Canada; and with some reductions on the other, which he hoped to be able to make in the army and navy, which left a total of 15,811,000*l.* Thus it appeared, that there would remain a disposeable annual surplus of about 400,000*l.* after defraying the expence of all the establishments, and applying the annual million to the reduction of the National Debt. This surplus, Mr. Pitt proposed, in the present year, to appropriate to the farther reduction of the National Debt; and, at the same time, to repeal the temporary duty on malt, and certain permanent taxes, to the amount of about 200,000*l.* The taxes to which he adverted were, that upon female servants, which produced 31,000*l.*; the tax upon carts and waggons, which yielded 30,000*l.*; the tax upon houses having less than seven windows, which amounted to 56,000*l.*; and the tax of a halfpenny per

pound on candles, which brought in 106,000*l.*; making the aggregate amount of the taxes, to be repealed, 223,000*l.*

He then shewed the progressive increase of the revenue, by the augmented produce of the duties upon all the principal objects of taxation, and the growing prosperity of the country, by the increase of the exports and imports.—In 1782, the imports, according to the valuation at the Custom-house, amounted to 9,714,000*l.*; and they had gradually increased, in each succeeding year, till, in the year 1790, they rose to 19,130,000*l.* The export of British manufactures, which forms a more important ground of exultation, and a more decisive criterion of national prosperity, amounted, in 1782, to 9,919,000*l.*, and in 1790 to 16,420,000*l.*;—and, including the foreign articles re-exported, the aggregate amount of the exports, from the British ports, in 1790, was 20,120,000*l.*—And there was every reason to believe, that the internal trade of the country had kept equal pace with its foreign trade.

Mr. Pitt, leaving the dry calculations of finance, now entered into a philosophical investigation of the causes which had produced such beneficial effects. The first, and most obvious, notion which every man's mind would suggest to him was, that they arose from the natural industry and energy of the country;—but what was it which had enabled that industry and energy to act with such peculiar vigour, and so far beyond the example of former periods?—The improvement which had been made in the mode of carrying on almost every branch of manufacture, and the degree to which labour had been abridged, by the invention and application of machinery, had, undoubtedly, had a considerable share in producing such important effects. There had also been seen, during these periods, more than at any former time, the effect of one circumstance, which had principally tended to raise this country to its mercantile pre-eminence—that peculiar degree of credit which, by a two-fold operation, at once gave additional facility and extent to the transactions of our merchants at home, and enabled them to obtain a proportionable superiority in the markets abroad. This advantage had been most conspicuous during the latter parts of the

periods referred to, and was constantly increasing, in proportion to the prosperity which it contributed to create.

In addition to these causes, the exploring and enterprising spirit of our merchants had been displayed in the extension of our navigation and our fisheries, and the acquisition of new markets in different parts of the world; and these efforts had received material assistance from the additional intercourse with France, in consequence of the commercial treaty; an intercourse which, though checked and abated by the existing distractions in that kingdom, had furnished a great additional incitement to industry and exertion.

But there was still another cause, even more satisfactory than these, because it was of a still more extensive and permanent nature; that constant accumulation of capital—that continual tendency to increase the operation of which was universally seen, in a greater or less proportion, whenever it was not obstructed by some public calamity, or by some mistaken and mischievous policy; but which must be conspicuous and rapid indeed, in any country which had once arrived at an advanced state of commercial prosperity. Simple, and obvious, as this principle was, and felt and observed as it must have been, in a greater or less degree, even from the earliest periods, Mr. Pitt doubted, whether it had ever been fully developed and sufficiently explained, but in the writings of an author of our own times, (Dr. Adam Smith, in his Treatise on the Wealth of Nations) whose extensive knowledge of detail, and depth of philosophical research, would, he thought, furnish the best solution to every question connected with the history of commerce, or with the systems of political economy. This accumulation of capital arose from the continued application, of a part at least, of the profit obtained in each year, to increase the capital to be employed in a similar manner, and with continued profit, in the year following. The great mass of the property of the nation was thus constantly increasing at compound interest; the progress of which, in any considerable period, was what at first view, would appear incredible. Great as had been the effects of that cause already, they

must be greater in future; for its powers were augmented in proportion as they were exerted.

Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo.

It might, indeed, as we had ourselves experienced, be checked or retarded by particular circumstances;—it might, for a time, be interrupted, or even overpowered; but, where there was a fund of productive labour and active industry, it could never be totally extinguished. In the season of the severest calamity and distress, its operations would still counteract and diminish their effects;—in the first returning interval of prosperity, it would be active to repair them. If a period of continued tranquillity were looked to, the difficulty would be to imagine limits to its operation. None could be found, while there existed at home any one object of skill or industry short of its utmost possible perfection;—one spot of ground in the country, capable of higher cultivation and improvement;—or while there remained abroad any new market that could be explored, or any existing market that could be extended. From the intercourse of commerce, it would, in some measure, participate in the growth of other nations, in all the possible varieties of their situations. The rude wants of countries emerging from barbarism, and the artificial and increasing demands of luxury and refinement, would equally open new sources of treasure, and new fields of exertion, in every state of society, and in the remotest quarters of the globe. It was this principle which, according to the uniform result of history and experience, maintained, on the whole, in spite of the vicissitudes of fortune, and the disasters of empires, a continued source of progressive improvement in the general order of the world.

These circumstances, which appeared to Mr. Pitt to have contributed most immediately to our national prosperity, were again connected with others yet more important.—They were obviously and necessarily connected with the duration of peace, the continuance of which, on a secure and permanent footing, must ever be the first object of the

foreign policy of this country. They were connected still more with its internal tranquillity, and with the natural effects of a free, but well-regulated, government. What was it, he asked, which had produced, in the last hundred years, so rapid an advance, beyond what could be traced in any other period of our history? What but that, during that time, under the mild and just government of the illustrious princes of the family now on the throne, a general calm had prevailed through the country, beyond what was ever before experienced; and we had also enjoyed, in greater purity and perfection, the benefit of those original principles of our constitution, which were ascertained and established by the memorable events which closed the preceding century? This was the great and governing cause, the operation of which had given scope to all the other circumstances which had been enumerated.

It was this union of liberty with law, which, by raising a barrier, equally firm, against the encroachments of power, and the violence of popular commotion, afforded to property its just security, produced the exertion of genius and labour, the extent and solidity of credit, the circulation and increase of capital, which formed and upheld the national character, and set in motion all the springs which actuated the great mass of the community, through all its various descriptions.

The laborious industry of those useful and extensive classes,—the peasantry and yeomanry of the country; the skill and ingenuity of the artificer; the experiments and improvements of the wealthy proprietor of land; the bold speculations, and successful adventures, of the opulent merchant and enterprizing manufacturer; these were all to be traced to the same source, and all derived from hence both their encouragement and their reward. On this point, therefore, said Mr. Pitt, let us principally fix our attention, let us preserve this first and most essential object, and every other is in our power! Let us remember, that the love of the constitution, though it acts as a sort of natural instinct in the hearts of Englishmen, is strengthened by reason and reflection; that it is a constitution which we not merely admire from traditional reverence, which we do not.

flatter from prejudice or habit, but which we cherish and value, because we know that it practically secures the tranquillity and welfare both of individuals and of the public, and provides, beyond any other frame of government which has ever existed, for the real and useful ends which form, at once, the only true foundation, and the only rational object, of all political societies.

Having drawn his calculations to a close, and fully developed the principles out of which the national prosperity had grown to its present gigantic size, Mr. Pitt drew the forcible and just inference, that the scene which was then exhibited to the contemplation of the House, was not the transient effect of accident, not the short-lived prosperity of a day, but the general and natural result of regular and permanent causes. The season of our severe trial was at an end, and we were at length relieved, not only from the dejection and gloom which had, a few years before, hung over the country, but from the doubt and uncertainty which, even for a considerable time after our prospect had begun to brighten, still mingled with the hopes and expectations of the public. We might yet, indeed, be subject to those fluctuations which often happen in the affairs of great nations, and which it was impossible to calculate or foresee; but, as far as there could be any reliance on human speculations, we had the best ground, from the experience of the past, to look with satisfaction to the present, and with confidence to the future.—" *Nunc demum redit animus, cùm non spem modò ac votum securitas publica, sed ipsius voti fiduciam et robur assumpserit.*" This was a state not of hope only, but of attainment; not barely the encouraging prospect of future advantage, but the solid and immediate benefit of present and actual possession.

This was a fit subject for congratulation to the country, and after he had dwelt on it for a short time, Mr. Pitt concluded a most eloquent, animated, and argumentative speech, with an anxious and fervent prayer, that at that period of success, for the sake of the present age, and of posterity, there might be no intermission in that vigilant attention of Parliament to every object connected with the revenue, the resources, and the credit of the state, which had carried us through all

our difficulties, and led to this rapid and wonderful improvement; that, still keeping pace with the exertions of the legislature, the genius and spirit, the loyalty and public virtue, of a great and free people, might long deserve, and (under the favour of Providence) might ensure, the continuance of this unexampled prosperity; and that Great Britain might thus remain, for ages, in the possession of those distinguished advantages, under the protection and safeguard of that constitution, to which (as had been truly asserted from the Throne) they were principally to be ascribed, and which was indeed the great source, and the best security, of all that could be dear and valuable to a nation.

After some sarcastic remarks from Mr. Sheridan, in his usual style, and a few observations from Mr. Fox, several resolutions, proposed by Mr. Pitt, for the repeal of the different taxes to which he had referred in his speech, were carried without a division, and a bill ordered to be prepared for giving effect to the same.

A Lottery being the means suggested by Mr. Pitt for raising a distinct sum, a debate took place on the subject, in the committee of supply, early in the month of March. Many strong arguments were pressed by the opposition against this mode of raising money, on the ground of its tendency to produce a spirit of gambling among the lower orders of society, highly injurious to their comforts, pernicious to their morals, and destructive of their habits of industry. It was, on the other hand, contended, that those evils arose from the abuse of the practice, and not from its use; that the regulations which had been adopted for their suppression had already been attended with beneficial effects; that if other means of correction should be found necessary, it would be easy to adopt them; and that, as this was the most easy method of raising money, because it occasioned the imposition of no new burthen upon the people, but was rendered productive by the spontaneous contributions of the public, it ought not to be lightly given up It admits not of dispute, however, that if the abuses of lotteries cannot be wholly eradicated by legislative provisions, the lotteries themselves ought to be totally abandoned; for no consideration of emolument can be put in competition with the morals of a nation; and no minister

can be justified, on either civil or religious grounds, in rendering the latter subservient to the former.

At the beginning of April, Mr. Wilberforce again brought the question of the Slave-Trade before the House, when Mr. Pitt took a decided part in favour of its immediate abolition. Though he did not rise till a very late period of the debate, he spoke at great length, and with great energy, exhausting all the stores of his mind, and all the powers of his eloquence to induce the House to concur with him in his opinion of the question. Mr. Dundas's motion, however, for abolishing the trade *gradually*, instead of *immediately*, was carried by a majority of sixty-eight. The subject was revived on the last day of the same month, when the *period* of abolition became the only ground of difference; and, after some debate, Lord Mornington's motion, which Mr. Pitt supported for fixing that period at the first of January, 1795, was rejected, and Sir Edward Knatchbull's motion, for substituting the same day in the subsequent year, was adopted.

This was the time chosen for introducing a new system of police into the metropolis, or rather for taking the administration of justice in the capital and its vicinity, out of the venal hands into which it had fallen of late, and entrusting it to magistrates to be appointed by the King, and to receive a stipulated salary for their attendance, to be regulated by Parliament. The motive of this change arose out of the scandalous venality which many of the magistrates had displayed, and the consequent mal-practices of various kinds to which it necessarily, gave birth, in contempt of law, and to the disgrace of justice.—Nor could this profligacy excite wonder, when it was known that men of the lowest class, destitute of education, ignorant of law, and possessing not a single qualification for the office, were, by some strange and unaccountable neglect, put in the commission of the peace. When the measure was submitted to Parliament, it was opposed, in the first place, as a matter of course, because it originated with ministers; and, secondly, because it was maintained to have a direct tendency to increase the influence of the Crown, by creating an additional number of places, at the disposal of the government; and a body of magistrates

subservient to the will of the Minister. Some of the powers, too, which the Bill was intended to delegate over vagabonds who could give no satisfactory account of themselves, and of their mode of life, and over known thieves whom the Police constables were authorized to apprehend at any place of public resort, whither they might be reasonably believed to have repaired for the purpose of committing their depredations, were strongly objected to, as unwarrantable infringements on the liberty of the subject.

Suggestions, like these, seldom fail to become popular, for the people generally look at the superficies of things without submitting to the trouble of investigating causes, or of examining the nature of probable effects. In the present instance, however, the good sense of the public prevailed over the prejudiced representations of individuals, and the Parliament consented to make the *experiment;* for, as an *experiment*, the bill was intended; and, on that account, its duration was limited to five years. The measure has been found by experience most fully to answer the purpose for which it was framed. Every temptation to peculation is removed by the obligation to account, on oath, to the government, for all fees taken at the respective public offices, established by the act;—which fees are devoted to the public use; while, from the first establishment of this system to the present time, a period of sixteen years, not a single action or complaint has been preferred against any one of the magistrates, for misconduct, or for any breach of duty; while the apprehensions professed, respecting their subserviency to the minister of the day, have been proved to be destitute of foundation. Great public benefits, too, have been derived from the measure, in the diminution of capital offences, and in the progressive decrease of capital punishments;* an object of great importance to every state. Still, it cannot be denied that regulations of police are, in a greater or less degree, of *necessity*, encroachments on the liberty of the subject;—and, therefore, it is that, in all free countries, the police is much more lax, and crimes much more frequent, than in arbitrary States. The only principle, indeed, on which a severe police can be defended, is that on which all criminal laws are founded, the

* See Appendix (A).

necessity of rendering the interests of individuals subservient to the general good. And, in the overgrown and crowded metropolis of a commercial country, it would be impossible to afford that protection to persons, and to property, which is one of the main objects of all civil government, without a strong *restrictive* and *corrective* police.

The reform thus introduced into the administration of justice, in the capital, was attempted by Mr. Grey, to be extended to the Parliamentary representation of the country. This latter design originated with a society newly established, arrogating to themselves, as it were exclusively, the appellation of *Friends of the People*; and consisting of several members of the House of Commons, some men of undoubted respectability, and others of various descriptions,—Men of Letters, Presbyterians, Catholics, and Unitarians.—At the head of them was placed Mr. Grey himself:—the Earl of Lauderdale, the present Duke of Bedford, Sir John Throckmorton, Mr. Baker, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Whitbread, and Mr. Erskine; Mr. Mackintosh (the present Recorder of Bombay), Mr. Malcolm Laing, the Scottish Historian, Mr. William Smith, Mr. Dennis O'Brien, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. William Fullarton, General Macleod, Mr. Carpenter Smith, Dr. Kippis, Dr. Towers, Mr. J. H. Stone, (afterwards the memorable correspondent of Dr. Priestley, and the gallant, or husband, of Miss Helen Maria Williams,) and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, were among the leading members of this society. The professed object of their association, as set forth in a well-written address, published about this time, was to obtain Parliamentary Reform, by extending the right of suffrage, and by shortening the duration of Parliaments. It was in conformity with one of their resolutions that Mr. Grey, on the 30th of April, gave notice of his intention to submit to the consideration of the House of Commons, in the course of the next session, a motion respecting a reform in the representation of the people.—Upon this intimation, Mr. Pitt immediately rose, admitting that he was not strictly regular in entering into any observations on the mere notice of a motion, and appealing to the chair, whether or no he should articulate a syllable. A call, however, from various parts of the House expressive of a desire to hear him, induced him to proceed. If ever there was an occasion, he said, in which the

mind of every man, who had any feeling for the present, or hope for he future, happiness of this country, should be interested, the present was the time for its exertion.—The present was the time in which the whole House should lose sight of form in the regulation of debate, and apply, at once, to the substance of the subject. Nothing could be said, nothing could be whispered, on such a subject, at such a time, which did not involve questions of the most extensive, the most serious, the most lasting, importance to the people of this country, to the very being of the State. He had other motives, he confessed, besides the general importance of the subject, to say a few words now upon it. It was a question on which he had thought attentively. He was unwilling to weary the House with many observations on his own conduct, or on what seemed not exactly to correspond with what he had professed in the earliest part of his public life, because he was convinced that the question to be brought forward on this subject would involve something more than the character, the fortune, the connection, the liberty, or the life, of any individual. It might affect the peace and tranquillity which, under the favour of Providence, this country had for a long time enjoyed, in a superior degree, perhaps, to any part of the habitable globe. It might affect us, who, from the time of general darkness and bondage to the present hour, had sat quietly, perceiving other nations struggling with tyranny and oppression, while we enjoyed our freedom; it might even bring us into anarchy and confusion, worse, if possible, than if we had to contend with despotism itself.

He thought the country should know what the opinions of public men were upon the subject now before them, and how they felt at this moment. He confessed they had a peculiar right to know, from him, his opinion on the question of Parliamentary Reform. He could have wished, that a subject of this immense importance had been brought forward at a time when he was personally more able to take an active part in a debate than at present; but, above all, on a day on which the House had no other matter to attend to. He also wished that Mr. Grey had brought it forward on some distinct proposition, stated to the House, that they might, early in the next session of Parliament,

take the whole question into consideration; in which case he should, perhaps, have reserved himself till the day appointed for the discussion of the question; but, as this was a general notice without any specific proposition, he felt no difficulty in asserting, in the most decisive terms, that he objected both to the time and the mode in which the business was brought forward. He felt this subject so deeply, that he must speak on it without any reserve. He would, therefore, confess that, in one respect, he had changed his opinion on the subject, and he was not afraid to own it. He retained his opinion of the propriety of a reform in Parliament, if it could be obtained without danger or mischief, by a general concurrence, pointing, harmlessly, at its object. But he confessed he was afraid, at this moment, that, if agreed on by that House, the security of all the blessings we enjoyed would be shaken to the foundation. He acknowledged he was not sanguine enough to hope that a reform, at this time, could safely be attempted. His object always had been, but now was most particularly so, to give permanence to that which we actually enjoyed, rather than seek to remove any subsisting grievances. He conceived, that the beautiful system of our constitution, and the only security for the continuance of it, was in the House of Commons; but he was sorry to say, that security was imperfect while there were persons who thought that the people were not adequately represented in Parliament. It was essential to the happiness of the people, that they should be convinced, that they, and the members of that House, felt an identity of interest; that the nation at large, and the representatives of the people, held a conformity of sentiment:—this was the essence of a proper representative assembly; under this legitimate authority, a people could be said to be really free; and this was a state in which the true spirit of proper democracy could be said to subsist. This was the only mode by which freedom and good order could be well united. If attempts were made to go beyond this, they ended in a wild state of nature, which mocked the name of liberty, and by which the human character was degraded, instead of being free. He once thought, and he still thought, upon the point of the representation of the Commons, that if some mode could be adopted, by which the people could have any additional security for a continuance of the blessings which they now enjoyed,

it would be an improvement in the constitution of the country. This was the extent of his object; further than this he never wished to go; and if this could be obtained, without the risk of losing what we possessed, he should think it wise to make the experiment. When he said this, it was not because he believed there was any existing grievance felt at this hour in the country. On the contrary, he believed that, at this moment, we actually did enjoy as much happiness as we could, or that a rational man ought to, hope for; and if he said otherwise, he should be dealing unfairly with the House, with the public, and with himself; for these were his genuine feelings. He thought that we were in a state of prosperity and progressive improvement, seldom equalled, never excelled, by any nation, at any period in the history of the world.

Mr. Pitt then adverted to the time and mode selected for the discussion of the question. Upon these points every rational man had two things to consider; first, the probability of success; and, secondly, the risk to be run by the attempt: upon the latter consideration, he owned his apprehensions were very great; he feared the commotions which might follow the attempt; and, looking at it in both points of view, he saw nothing but discouragement. He perceived no chance of succeeding in the attempt in the first place, but saw great danger of anarchy and confusion in the second. It was true he had made some attempts upon this subject himself, but at what time? What were the circumstances in which he made them? There was then a general apprehension, which was now, he thanked God, referred to rather as a matter of history than as any thing else, all fear of danger being entirely removed; but there was then a general feeling, that we were upon the verge of a public national bankruptcy, and a strong sense was entertained of practical grievances. This was at the conclusion of the American war, succeeding a period when the influence of the Crown was declared to have increased, to be increasing, and that it ought to be diminished. Many thought, and he was of the number, that, unless there was a better connection between the Parliament and the people, and an uniformity of sentiment between them, the safety of the country would be endangered. Many moderate men, however, there were at that

time, who admitted the existence of abuses which required correction, but who, having maturely weighed the state of the case, even as it stood then, were of opinion, that although some evil was to be found, yet that, on the whole, the good preponderated, and, therefore, from a fear of possible consequences, they voted against his plan of reform. If in such a time, and under such circumstances, moderate men thought in this way, what would they think under the present circumstances? He put it not only to that House, but also to the country at large, and he would ask all moderate men in it what were their feelings on the subject at that moment? He believed that he could anticipate the answer —"This is not a time to make hazardous experiments." Could the lessons which had been given to the world within a few years be forgotten? Could it be supposed that men felt this country, as now happily contrasted with others, to be in a deplorable condition? Could it be expected that these moderate men would become converts to the new system attempted in another country?—A system which all men would reject. He hoped that such doctrine would not find many proselytes among the moderate and the peaceable; if not, there could be no hope of success, and, consequently, no wisdom in the attempt.

But it seemed that there was a great number of persons in this country who wished for a reform in Parliament, and that they were increasing daily; that their number was great he was happy enough to doubt;—what their interest or their vigour would be, if called upon to exert themselves against the good sense and courage of the sober part of the community, he could not say, nor did it occasion him much apprehension. He did not mean to allude to the sentiments of any particular member of that House for the purpose of being severe; but when they came in the shape of advertisements in newspapers, inviting the public, as it were, to repair to their standard, and to join them, they should be reprobated, and the tendency of their meetings exposed to the people in their true colours. He was willing, as long as he could, to allow gentlemen the best construction that could be put upon their actions, and to give them credit for their sentiments; but the advertisements he alluded to were sanctioned with the very name of the honourable gentleman who had given this notice. He would say that

there should be a great deal of activity on the part of the friends of our constitution, who ought to take pains properly to address the public mind, and to keep it in that state which was necessary to preserve our present tranquillity. He had seen, with concern, that those gentlemen of whom he spoke, who were members of that House, were connected with others, who professed not reform only, but direct hostility to the very form of our government. This afforded grounds for suspicion, that the motion for reform was nothing more than the preliminary to the overthrow of the whole system of our present government. If they succeeded, they would overthrow, what he thought, the best constitution that was ever formed on the habitable globe. These considerations led him to wish the House to take great care that no encouragement should be given to any step that might ultimately sap the very basis of our constitution. When he saw these opinions published, and knew them to be connected with others that were libels on the form of our government—the hereditary succession to the throne—the hereditary titles of our nobility—and which aimed at the destruction of all subordination in the state, he confessed he felt no inclination to promise his support to the proposed motion for a Parliamentary Reform. It was to follow a madness which had been called liberty in another country; a condition at war with true freedom and good order; a state to which despotism itself was preferable;—a state in which liberty could not exist for a day;—if it appeared in the morning it must perish before sun-set.

He begged leave to assure the House that he thought it his duty, to the last hour of his life, to oppose, to the utmost of his power, attempts of this nature; so much did he disapprove of the present attempt, that if he were called on to choose, either to hazard this, or for ever abandon all hopes or desire to have any reform at all, he should say he would have no reform whatever; and he believed that, as a member of Parliament, as an Englishman, as an honest man, it was his duty to make that declaration at once. He wished Mr. Grey to reflect seriously on his character, and on the stake which he possessed in the country; and to consider how much might be lost by an indiscreet attempt upon the subject. He had thus, he said, made a sort of compendium of all

the objections which he should submit to the House and to the public, if the motion should ever be made, and he concluded with an encomium on the British constitution, which he truly described as a monument of human wisdom, which had been hitherto the exclusive blessing of the English nation.

This manly and decisive declaration of sentiment Mr. Pitt thought, and justly thought, the ferment which began to manifest itself in the various clubs now established in the different parts of the country, the intercourse which many of them maintained with the factious societies in France, and the approbation which they loudly expressed even of the most violent principles which had been promulgated, and of the most atrocious proceedings which had taken place in that country, imperatively required. He thus seized the first fair opportunity which occurred for avowing his opinions in the most unequivocal manner, in order to clear the principles, on which he had formerly acted, from all doubt and misapprehension, and to prevent any thoughtless people from being led away by the erroneous notion that, because, at a very different period, and under very different circumstances, he had stood forth the advocate of Parliamentary Reform, he would now appear the champion of any measure that might be proposed for that purpose, however different in its nature, and opposite in its tendency, to that plan which he had himself suggested. It required no effort, in such a mind as Mr. Pitt possessed, to make an avowal which could not fail to expose him to obloquy and reproach, on the ground of steadiness and consistency; fortified as it was by conscious integrity, and upheld by a strong sense of public duty.

He was briefly answered by Mr. Fox, who declared that he had been long convinced that the interest of the nation demanded a reform in Parliament. The frequent opposition of sentiments between the people and their representatives proved to him that the nation was not fairly represented; otherwise there would seldom, if ever, exist such extreme variances between them. He vindicated the society of the Friends of the People, and maintained that it consisted of as respectable individuals as any who supported the ministry. He admitted that some

of its members were violent republicans;—but there were some ministerialists much worse, decided adherents to arbitrary power. These last were the true authors of innovations, as they were termed,—as if the constitution of this country was not erected upon perpetual changes of bad for good, and of good for better. But improvements were not to be confounded with innovations; the meaning of which word was always odious, as it conveyed an idea of alterations for the worse.

It has been seen that *some* of its members were not only "violent republicans;" though, as such, they must, of necessity, be hostile to the constitution of Great Britain, which is certainly not a republic,—but determined jacobins, intent on the establishment of a wild democracy, on the ruins of all the existing institutions of the country;—such, at least, were Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Mr. John Harford Stone. Mr. Burke, who was aware of the inability of respectable and well-meaning men to check such furious spirits in their democratic career, could not suffer the unfounded panegyrics of Mr. Fox to pass without appropriate censure.—He severely reprobated the project entertained by these associated champions of reform, whom he, not inaptly, compared to quacks, who offered preventive remedies when no disease was apprehended. He warned the friends of the people to beware of reforms, of which, when once begun, no human being could tell the termination. The kingdom was full of factious people, who, deluded by visionary speculations, longed to realize them at any cost; and would readily plunge the nation into blood and confusion, for the sake of establishing the systems of government with which they were enamoured. Mr. Windham, too, observed, that when reforms were proposed, grievances ought also to be duly weighed; and if the remedy appeared to be worse than the disease, it ought, in common prudence, to be rejected. This was the language of common sense, alike applicable to the concerns of domestic life, and to the complicated affairs of state. Its plain dictates, however, were not sufficient to satisfy the ardent patriotism of Mr. Sheridan, who saw, in the creation of Peers, a sufficient reason for a reform in Parliament, and seemed to wonder that Mr. Pitt, having once been friendly to *a* plan of reform, under

circumstances particularly favourable to its adoption, should be inimical to *any* plan of reform, and under circumstances however unfavourable.

In fact, however desirable a rational and practicable reform of those irregularities, and of those evils which time had engendered in the system of representation, might be, he would have been an unwise man, and a very bad minister, who could have thought of promoting it, at a period like the present, when the press groaned beneath the weight of publications, calculated and designed to alienate the affections of the people, from the constitution and system of government under which the nation had increased in prosperity and happiness for centuries; and to rouse them to similar acts of factious violence, and rebellious outrage, with those which had rendered France the scorn and the dread of surrounding states. In some of these publications the wildest notions of the democratical fanatics of France were not only seriously and gravely praised, as the emanations of superior wisdom, but most earnestly recommended to the adoption of Englishmen, though the necessary consequence of their adoption must be a rooted enmity to their own form of government. One of these writers, after quoting an article of the new French constitution, on the *sovereignty of the people*, observes, with equal ignorance and presumption, "The origin of power is here traced to its primary source; all power is declared to be derived from the people.—*They have the only legitimate right* to determine on the nature of that form of government, or constitution, which they themselves are to live under. They are the *sole judges* of the general good."* Now, if this were true, it followed, of course, that the King of Great Britain was an usurper,—that he and his Parliament had no right to make laws,—and that the laws themselves were all invalid.—In making the practical application of his principles to his own country, the author having contrasted the French system of representation with the English, having bestowed unqualified praises on the first, and lavished indiscriminate censure on the last, deduces the following natural inference.—"If what I have related is true, and

* The French Constitution, with Remarks, &c. by Benjamin Flower, p. 110.

let any one deny it if he can, our representation, as it is called, is little else than a semblance, a form, a theory, a mockery, a shadow, if not a nuisance."—"It is a matter of doubt whether the House of Commons, all circumstances considered, is a blessing or a curse to the nation."—"The House of Commons, as at present constituted, is little more than an engine of corruption, in the hands of the Crown, or the ministers of the Crown, to accomplish measures which are often directly opposite to the interests of the people, and calculated to promote the purposes of ambition or despotism."—It is easy to imagine what kind of reform such patriots would desire;—and it is much to be doubted whether even their own favourite panacea for all state evils, *universal suffrage, and annual Parliaments*, would have satisfied them much longer than a cripled Monarchy, and a degraded Monarch, satisfied the zealous reformers of France, whom they constantly held up to admiration, and to imitation. It could, however, admit of no doubt at all, that they aimed at no reform that was compatible with the existence of the British constitution.* Indeed, to such a height was the revolutionary ardour carried, that it sometimes degenerated into downright impiety.—In the introductory observations to the work before quoted, the author indirectly compares the authors of the French Revolution with the Saviour of the world; and the opposers and enemies of that event, to the Jews who consigned him to the cross; which Jews he distinguishes as "the *high church mob* of that day."†

Another writer, quitting the peaceful paths of commerce for the rugged field of political controversy, boldly declared the French Revolution "to be the greatest and most glorious event that ever took place in the history of the world," as "the only Revolution that had *completely* respected the rights of mankind:" as "the only Revolution that was likely to change the object of ambition among men, and to con-

* The abolition of episcopacy, (which the King, it is gravely maintained, has a right to consent to, notwithstanding his coronation oath,) of all tests, and subscriptions, and of all laws for the punishment of blasphemous attacks on the *Trinity*, appear to have been among the favourite subjects of reform for which this writer so strenuously contended. And it is tolerably certain, that had his Parliamentary Reform taken place, those *abuses* would speedily have been cured.

† Introductory Observations, p. 3.

vert it into an emulation of superior *wisdom* and *virtue*, instead of a lust of power and conquest."—And he declared it to be his opinion, that "to arraign such a Revolution was to plead against mankind—to involve one's-self in the *crimen læsæ majestatis generis humani.*"*

Opinions of this nature, however erroneous, however absurd, and however pernicious, so long as they continued merely speculative, were not proper subjects for the cognizance of government, who should never, without the existence of that necessity which rises superior to all common measures of prudence, and to all common maxims of policy, being founded on the paramount principle of self-preservation, interfere with the freedom of the press.—But speculative opinions were of little value in the minds of these sanguine admirers of France, who valued them only for their general applicability to all countries, and who ardently wished to promote their application to our own.—Thomas Paine, who had stood the foremost among these champions of reform, had lately published the second part of his system of demolition, for the avowed purpose of applying the French principles to practice in Great Britain; and so to tear up the monarchy, aristocracy, and clergy, root and branch. The seditious societies which had, by this time, increased in every part of the kingdom, and more especially the London Corresponding Society, whose agents were both numerous and active, circulated this pestiferous publication with incredible industry; so that there was scarcely a town or village in the kingdom, into which it did not penetrate, and in which it was not spread. Its effects soon became visible;—the voice of disaffection grew louder and louder;—and there was good reason for apprehending a most pernicious change in the sentiments and disposition of the lower classes of society, whose credulity is great in proportion to the weakness of their judgment, whose passions are easily flattered, and whose understandings are easily misled.

Mr. Pitt's education, the direction of his studies, and the political principles which he had early imbibed, rendered him extremely averse from the adoption of measures, which went to restrain either the free-

* Letters on the Revolution of France, &c. by Thomas Christie. p. 59.

dom of opinion, or the liberty of the press. But this aversion grew out of his veneration for, and attachment to, the constitution of his country; and where he saw that endangered by the very toleration which it granted; and the liberty which it conferred; directed to its subversion; his principles and his duty combined to lead him to the pursuit of such means as should appear necessary to secure it against the danger which threatened it. It was, therefore, determined to issue a proclamation, in order to put the nation on their guard, and, if possible, to stop the circulation of this literary poison. A proclamation was accordingly published, on the 21st of May, "for preventing seditious meetings and writings."* It adverted to the attempts, by wicked and seditious writings, to excite groundless jealousies and discontents respecting the laws and constitution of the realm; and to the correspondence entered into, with sundry persons in foreign parts, with a view to forward the same criminal purposes; it gave a solemn warning to all subjects, as they tendered their own happiness, and that of their posterity, to guard against all such attempts, which aimed at the subversion of all regular government within this kingdom, and which were inconsistent with the peace and order of society;—and it commanded all magistrates to make diligent inquiry, in order to discover the authors and printers of such wicked and seditious writings, and all others who should disperse the same; and to take effectual care to suppress and prevent all riots, tumults, and disorders which might be attempted to be raised or made by any person or persons.

A copy of this proclamation Mr. Pitt very prudently communicated to such members of the opposition as were known, or believed, to coincide with Mr. Burke, in the apprehensions which he entertained from the present posture of affairs. And while it was under their consideration, and before it was issued, Mr. Fox and Mr. Whitbread brought forward two motions in the House of Commons, which gave rise to a discussion of some of those facts, a knowledge of which had principally induced the Minister to have recourse to the measure. On the 11th of May, the former of these gentlemen, who suffered no

* See Apendix (B.)

opportunity to escape for the acquisition of popularity among dissenters of every denomination, stood forth the champion of the Unitarians, who had petitioned the House for a repeal of the penal statutes which it had been found necessary to enact against them about a century before; and which, though seldom enforced, still operated as some restraint upon them, and prevented them from attacking the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, with the same hardihood, and the same licentiousness, which their own tenets were so well calculated to inspire. Mr. Fox, in support of his motion for the repeal, as if enamoured of the theoretical reasoning of the French reformers, argued from the abstract principle of toleration, which he called upon the House to recognize, and to establish, as founded on the unalienable rights of man, without suffering any notions of political expediency, or of practical effects, to interfere with their decision.—He maintained that the resignation of any religious right (he should have said, the dereliction of any religious duty) was impossible; and he censured the established Church as inculcating the *execrable doctrine* of passive obedience and non-resistance; thence arguing, that as the church could not be obeyed without a breach of moral obligation, and even of positive law, (an assumption which no man, it is believed, ever thought of advancing but Mr. Fox, and which is as gross a libel upon the purest church in Christendom as was ever uttered, even by its most inveterate enemies,) it would be the height of injustice to persecute any person for non-conformity to the establishment.

The question was considered by Mr. Burke as presenting itself to the House rather in a political, than a theological, point of view.—He, very wisely, disclaimed the idea of arguing on any but *social* rights, recognizing man only in a state of society. Disclaiming, therefore, all abstract reasoning, and metaphysical subtleties, he confined himself solely to those considerations which Mr. Fox had deemed unworthy even of notice,—the prudence and policy of the measure. He judged it proper to examine *who* the persons were whom the House were called upon to relieve,—what their principles,—what their opinions,—what their connexions,—and what was their conduct. He declared his repugnance to penalties for religious sentiments; but when those sen-

timents were blended with certain political tenets, which might lead to the destruction of the church and state, he thought it the indispensable duty of the House to pause. It appeared evident to him, from the writings of Dr. Priestley, that the Unitarians, avowed enemies to all ecclesiastical establishments, aimed at the total subversion of the church. They had formed a society for the propagation of their opinions, and had raised a considerable fund for that purpose. Their principal object in the petition, then before the House, seemed to be, to obtain the countenance of Parliament by the recognition of their sect as a distinct and respectable body.

Mr. Burke then adverted to certain proceedings of a meeting of Unitarians, in February, 1791, at a tavern in the city,* when Dr.

* The following account of this meeting appeared in one of the papers of the day, and was evidently drawn up by some members of the society. "UNITARIAN SOCIETY.—Yesterday, this Society dined together at the King's Head Tavern, in the Poultry; Dr. Priestley was in the chair; and a number of the most distinguished gentlemen in the metropolis, of Unitarian principles, assisted in the temperate festivity of the day.

"This society is established for the purpose of promoting CHRISTIAN *knowledge*, and the practice of virtue; and if we may judge from the enlightened and benevolent spirit which they manifested in this convivial meeting, the views of the institution will be promoted by example as well as precept; as a proof of which we shall enumerate some of the toasts that were given from different parts of the room.

"Prosperity to the Unitarian Society.

"The cause of civil and religious liberty throughout the world.

"Mr. Fox, and a speedy repeal of all the penal laws respecting religion.

"May the example of America teach all nations to reject religious distinctions, and to judge "of the citizen by his conduct.

"The National Assembly of France, and may every tyrannical government undergo a similar "revolution.

"May no man destroy another man's happiness in this world for the sake of securing it in "the next.

"The ladies and gentlemen who have asserted and supported civil and religious liberty, by "their writings and speeches.

"Thomas Paine, and the Rights of Man.

"Thanks to Mr. Burke for the important discussions he has provoked.

"May no societies, civil or religious, claim rights for themselves, that they are not ready "to concede to others.

"Success to Mr. Fox's intended motion to ascertain the Liberty of the Press.

"May the Sun of Liberty rise on Oxford as it has on Cambridge, and as it has long shone "on the Dissenters.

Priestley was in the chair, in order to prove their eagerness to intermeddle with politics. Among the toasts which they gave, was

" May the governments of the world learn, that the civil magistrate has no right to dictate " to any man what he shall believe, or in what manner he shall worship the Deity.

" May the example of one revolution make another unnecessary.

" After spending the afternoon in the harmony and exhilaration which the union of benevolent sentiments is calculated to inspire, Dr. Kippis, with a short encomium on that wonderful event in a neighbouring kingdom, which had rescued so many millions of their fellow-creatures from bondage, said, that some persons, who thought the Revolution of France calculated to meliorate the condition of man over all the earth, intended to commemorate the anniversary on the 14th of July next; and he took the sense of the company, whether they thought fit to co-operate in this design.

" Dr. Towers congratulated humanity on this glorious event, which, he was sorry to say, had not been received in England with the warm welcome to which it was entitled; for to Englishmen in particular, that Revolution ought to be truly dear, since it gave an example of the sacred regard that was due to the religious, as well as the civil, liberty of man.—He, who had zealously entered into the last festival for the commemoration of the event, cheerfully adopted the proposal of his reverend brother; and he was sure, now that the principles of the Revolution were properly understood, it would be adopted by the public with the same alacrity. It was generally declared, by the company, that they would assist in the celebration. The evening concluded with the appointment of stewards for the next anniversary festival of the Unitarian Society. The following gentlemen were nominated:—Michael Dodson, Esq. T. B. Hollis, Esq. Rev. Dr. Kippis, Rev. Mr. Lindsey, James Martin, Esq. M. P., J. H. Stone, Esq. William Smith, Esq. M. P., John Towgood, Esq."

That a society composed of men who denied that Christ was the Son of God, and, in short, refused to believe the account which the Divine Founder of the Christian Religion gave of himself, and of his destination, while he was upon earth, should seek to impose upon the world, by asserting that they were established for the purpose of *promoting Christian knowledge*, must excite astonishment and indignation in the mind of every honest Christian.—So far, indeed, were they from wishing to promote the interests of Christianity, that it is a fact, here advanced upon the best authority, that one of their eight members, whose names are given above as stewards elect, has several children—not one of whom has been christened; and not one of whom, of course, is a Christian. This same Unitarian, too, like most of the sect, treats the word of God in the most irreverent manner, rejects such parts of scripture as he cannot reduce to a level with his own very confined powers of comprehension, as fabulous; and, very conveniently, adapting his Creed to his wishes, discards the doctrine of future punishment, as laid down in the sacred writings, as utterly incompatible with the benevolent character of the Deity! —Here, too, we find Mr. J. H. Stone, a member of Mr. Grey's Society of *Friends of the People*, again making himself conspicuous. Dr. Towers's congratulation of *humanity* on an event which gave rise to more acts of *inhumanity* than any other recorded in history, not excepting even the horrid massacre of St. Bartholomew; and on proposing to commemorate a day (the 14th of July), when the rabble of Paris took possession of the Bastille on which the most inhuman ferocity was displayed, and the most horrible acts of barbarity were perpetrated, was equally appropriate, and equally consistent with the rest of the scene.

"Thomas Paine, Esq. and the Rights of Man,"—He distrusted the principles of the Unitarians, as he conceived them to be connected with the Revolution Society, which had leagued with clubs in foreign countries for the purpose of working the downfall of the constitution; and, in order to prove that he asserted nothing but the truth, he read several extracts from the correspondence of that society, recently published.

Mr. Burke avowed his detestation of the Birmingham riots, but, at the same time, expressed his conviction that the dissenters had, in some measure, brought the evil upon themselves, by the general line of politics which they had lately pursued, as well as by their conduct at the meeting alluded to, when the people of England were invited to celebrate the anniversary of the French Revolution, on the subsequent 14th of July. The riots did not proceed from religious bigotry, but were, manifestly, of a political nature. Dr. Priestley had long taught his Unitarian principles in Birmingham without molestation, and, indeed, as he acknowledged himself, with pleasure and with success. How happened it that he had never been persecuted before? How came the madness of the populace to be reserved for that unlucky moment, when he chose to sink the character of the divine in that of the politician, not only to lavish the most extravagant praises on the French Revolution, but to recommend to the people of England, the celebration of that event from the chair, at the King's Head meeting.

The Unitarians having quoted the example of France, in proof of the sacred regard which in one country, at least, was paid to religious liberty, Mr. Burke compared the persecutions, on account of religion, which had there taken place, to what had been so named in England. There, a great part of the nation had been driven to poverty, wretchedness, famine, and death, for avowed scruples of conscience; here, the houses of the leaders of a certain party in the town of Birmingham, had been destroyed by an infatuated mob, on the supposition, that the principles of the party were inimical to the existing government.

In this land of bigotry, punishment had been inflicted on the rioters, and restitution made to the sufferers. In France, a country adored by the Unitarians, for the transcendency of its government, for its complete possession of liberty, and its much-envied constitution, although outrages ten thousand times greater had been committed, no inquiry had taken place, no punishment had been inflicted, no restitution made. If it were alleged, in excuse for such conduct, that it was rendered unavoidable, by the inveterate evils of the former system of religion, he should reply, that the enlightened philosophers of the present day seemed to have discovered new meanings in old words; that they had formed a new vocabulary, in which the destruction of ancient establishments was termed *reform*, and resistance to dangerous innovations *persecution*. Mr Burke closed these just remarks with observing, that those people could be little entitled to the favour of Parliament who held up the proceedings of the French as examples for imitation in this country.

Mr. William Smith, one of the stewards elect, took upon himself to defend not only the principles, but the conduct, of the Unitarians, of whom he declared himself to be one. Surely no person professing the Unitarian faith, if faith that may be called which consists in a disbelief of the fundamental doctrines of christianity, ought to be allowed to assist in the formation of laws, under a constitution of which the established church forms an essential part; when a man cannot hold even the most trifling office without giving a test of his attachment to that church. Mr. Smith asserted, that they were a sect completely unconnected with other dissenters, and *with clubs and associations of every description*. Never was a more unguarded assertion made by any man in any assembly. So far were the Unitarians from *being disconnected with clubs and associations of every description*, that of the *eight* Unitarian stewards, mentioned in a preceding note, *six* were, at this very time, members of the society of the "Friends of the People;" namely, T. B. Hollis, Esq. Rev. Dr. Kippis; James Martin, Esq. M. P. J. H. Stone, Esq. John Towgood, Esq. and, *mirabile dictu!*—William Smith,

Esq. M. P. himself.* A seventh, Michael Dodson, Esq. was member of the Revolution Society; as were also four of the others, namely, Mr. Hollis, Dr. Kippis, Mr. Stone, and Mr. Towgood!† These plain facts are better than a thousand arguments, in answer to the statement of Mr. Smith, who further remarked, that, though the Unitarians were friendly to the French Revolution, it did not follow that they approved of every abuse, and of all the confusion which had since occurred, nor that they wished to see the example of France imitated in England. So far were they from attempting to subvert the government of their country, that he believed, and knew them *to be firm and steady friends to the constitution.* It must not be forgotten that Dr. Priestley himself was at the head of the Unitarians;—some specimens of the firmness and steadiness of *his* friendship to the constitution have already been exhibited; and more will soon be produced.

Mr. Pitt opposed the motion, as it seemed to be acknowledged, on all hands, no practical evils had ever resulted, or were likely to result, from the laws in question, and as danger might possibly accrue from the repeal of them. He thought it probable too, that the public might imbibe false ideas of the motives which had influenced the repeal of them; concluding, from appearances, that *the House of Commons had become indifferent to the established religion*, and *careless of what infringements were made upon it.*

If, indeed, the laws in question had been repealed, there would have been something more than *appearances* to justify a conclusion so obvious and so just. Mr. Fox, in reply, repeated his admiration of the French Revolution, and declared that he had considered Paine's book a libel on the British constitution, but that he thought Mr. Burke's book was a libel on every free constitution in the world. He observed in conclusion, that after having read and reflected much on ecclesiastical establishments, he was, from the completest conviction,

* See the list of this society in the Appendix to the Chronicle of the Annual Register for 1792; printed for Otridge and Son, p. 70.

† See the list of the Revolution Society, in the Appendix to the Chronicle of the Original Annual Register for 1792; printed for Rivington, p. 134.

a firm and steady friend to them. This being the case, it was much to be deplored that Mr. Fox so frequently espoused the cause of those who were their avowed and inveterate enemies! The motion for a repeal was negatived by a majority of seventy-nine.

The Birmingham riots, which had been frequently mentioned incidentally in the course of debate, during the present session, were made the subject of a formal motion, by Mr. Whitbread, on the 21st of May, who proposed to the House to address the King, for such information as had been laid before ministers, concerning the conduct of the Warwickshire magistrates, during the riots; and likewise for an account of such measures as government had pursued against any particular magistrates for neglect of duty. His object was to censure the conduct of those magistrates, whom he charged, on the authority of numerous ex-parte affidavits, with encouraging the riots which it was their duty to suppress. He laboured to exculpate the dissenters from the charge of having been the authors of the seditious hand-bill which had given birth to the riots; and he asserted, that the dissenters were the *best and most ardent friends of the constitution.*

It fell to the lot of Mr. Dundas, who as Secretary of State for the home department, was specially entrusted with the superintendence of the internal police of the country, to answer Mr. Whitbread, which he did in the most complete and satisfactory manner. He shewed that government had taken every possible step to suppress the riots, not only without loss of time, but with an expedition that challenged applause, instead of censure. When tranquillity was fully restored, the Solicitor of the Treasury, accompanied by an able counsel, and one active magistrate, were sent down to discover, and to prosecute the offenders; and in the whole of the investigation, and subsequent prosecution, the most rigid impartiality had been observed. The magistrates, pointed out in the motion, had not, indeed, been prosecuted on the credit of the affidavits read by Mr. Whitbread, because the Attorney-General had not thought that they supplied sufficient grounds for a prosecution. But it was perfectly in the power of any one of the dissenters, who might be dissatisfied with their conduct, and

think differently from the Attorney-General on the subject, to proceed against them, either by information or indictment. It was, however, extraordinary, that when the Solicitor to the Treasury proposed to get any facts tending to criminate the magistrates, taken in the form of an information, the dissenters objected to it, and preferred the less satisfactory mode of proceeding, by obtaining affidavits; so bringing forward only one side of the question. Mr. Dundas remarked, that the magistrates could not be expected to be strictly accurate, either in their expressions or their conduct, during the existence of tumult or danger.

In allusion to Mr. Whitbread's attempt to exculpate the dissenters from the charge of having been the authors of the seditious hand-bill, the Secretary of State observed, that each side had imputed the act to the other; but it was remarkable that, immediately after an inquiry had been instituted, and a prosecution talked of, a dissenting minister of the town, who had long resided there, and on whom suspicions had fallen, suddenly disappeared, went abroad, and nothing more had ever been heard of him.—This vindication of the conduct of government was allowed by Mr. Whitbread himself, to be complete, except as to the misconduct of the county magistrates, against whom his motion was directed. But it was maintained, by the Attorney-General, that the affidavits, on which it was wished to ground a criminal prosecution, were highly unsatisfactory, as they had been taken in the absence of the persons accused, and without any cross-examination of witnesses. Mr. Russell, a dissenting magistrate, before whom they were sworn, refused, when pressed so to do, to let regular and full informations be taken; but afterwards sent up the affidavits, which gave birth to the present motion. He also expressed his opinion, that the affidavits themselves were, in part, contradictory, as, while some of them tended to shew that the magistrates encouraged the burning of houses, others proved, that the same magistrates, being only two against thousands, had, instead of intimidating, endeavoured to conciliate, the mob, and to lessen the mischief which they could not entirely prevent. He justly conceived, that it was extremely dangerous to trust to contradictory evidence, uttered in a moment of alarm, ill-understood, and

imperfectly recollected. Forty-six members only voted for Mr. Whitbread's motion, and one hundred and eighty-nine against it.

It is perfectly obvious, on considering the facts which came out in the course of this discussion, that the object of the Birmingham dissenters was to excite an odium, and to raise a clamour against the magistrates, and not to submit their conduct to a fair, impartial, and legal investigation in a Court of Justice. Mr. Russell would not otherwise have acted as he did, in adopting the extraordinary process of taking oaths which were not meant as the foundation of a criminal process, and were, therefore, extra-judicial, and such as he had no right to administer; and in refusing to enter into the only legal examination into which, as a magistrate, it was his duty to enter.

It has been seen, that Mr. William Smith asserted, in the House of Commons, that the Unitarians, at the head of whom was Dr. Priestley, were, to his knowledge, *firm and steady friends to the government*. Their leader, too, was not unfrequently panegyrized by Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey. The latter gentleman, in a debate, at the close of the present year, called him a "*great man*,"—"*a respectable person, whose character does honour to human nature*, and WHOSE WORKS DO NOT CONTAIN A SINGLE *principle hostile to government*." * It has already been shewn, that Mr. J. H. Stone was a member of the Unitarian Society. This gentleman went to Paris in the course of the year 1792, and presided at a *civic feast*, at White's Hotel, in Paris, on the 18th of November, at which Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Santerre, the brewer, and some other revolutionary worthies, were present; and at which, among other patriotic toasts, was given, "The abolition of hereditary titles *in England*." † A notable instance of the firmness and steadiness of his friendship to government!—As to Dr. Priestley, independently of his wish, constantly expressed, for the downfal of the Hierarchy, and the destruction of the Established Church, in his letters to Mr. E. Burke, already quoted, he praised the American Revolution as having set a glorious example to the whole world, of course including England, and parti-

* Debrett's Parliamentary Debates, for 1792. P. 157, 158.

† Rivington's Annual Register for 1792; Appendix to the Chronicle. P. 154.

cularly because " they had formed a completely new government on the principles of equal liberty, and the rights of man—*without nobles—without bishops—and without a King.*"—He declared this country to be approaching towards a crisis, similar to that which had occasioned the French Revolution; and if other nations should be benefited as much by the result as France had been, he did not scruple to pronounce, " that great crisis, dreadful as it might be in prospect, a *consummation devoutly to be wished.*"* If principles like these be not hostile to government, it will be difficult to ascertain in what such hostility consists.

As soon as the King's proclamation was laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament, Mr. Chauvelin, the French Ambassador at the Court of Saint James's, in pursuance of the new system of diplomacy, which the French Revolutionists had introduced, wrote to Lord Grenville, complaining of the tendency of the proclamation, and desiring that his letter might be communicated to Parliament. In this letter, Mr. Chauvelin observed, that the proclamation contained some expressions which might, contrary to the intentions of the British Ministry, give weight to the false opinions which the enemies of France endeavoured to circulate with respect to her intentions towards Great Britain. If certain individuals of this country had established a correspondence abroad, tending to excite troubles therein, and if, as the proclamation seemed to insinuate, Frenchmen had come into their views, Mr. Chauvelin asserted, that it was a proceeding wholly foreign to the French nation, *to the legislative body*, to the King, and to his Ministers; it was a proceeding of which they were entirely ignorant, which militated against every principle of justice, and which, when it became known, would be universally condemned in France.—Now, Mr. Chauvelin could not but know, that a correspondence had been carried on between various bodies of men in France, and the disaffected societies in this country, the particulars of which had been published in the newspapers both of France and of England; and that, although the King, whom *alone* he represented at the British court, neither gave, nor wished others to give, the smallest sanction, or countenance, to such

* Priestley's Letters to Burke, P. p. 40—153, 154.

factious proceedings, or to any interference in the internal concerns of other countries; yet, that the *legislative body* was neither ignorant of such proceedings, nor had the smallest disposition to discourage them. And so far from being *universally condemned in France*, they were, with the exception of the King and his trusty band of royalists, universally approved and applauded, particularly by the *Parisians*, who assumed to themselves the appellation of the *nation*, and whom Mr. Chauvelin seemed most anxious to conciliate and to represent.

This officious Frenchman was, very properly, reproved by Lord Grenville, for his irregular attempt to interfere in any matters of internal regulation about to be discussed in the British Parliament.—After expressing his ardent and sincere desire, in all the affairs which they might have to discuss together, to maintain that harmony and cordiality which corresponded with the King's intentions, his lordship observed, that he was persuaded that it was not the intention of Mr. Chauvelin to deviate from the rules and forms established in this kingdom, for the correspondence of the Ministers of foreign courts, with the King's Secretary of State for the foreign department. But his lordship added, that it was impossible for him not to remark, that, in the last note of Mr. Chauvelin, the only question related to a communication which he desired Lord Grenville to make to the two Houses of Parliament, before they deliberated on a subject which Mr. C. appeared to believe they were about to discuss. His lordship reminded Mr. C. that, as Secretary of State to his Majesty, he could not receive any communication from a foreign Minister; but, in order to lay it before the King, and to receive his Majesty's commands thereupon, and that the deliberations of the two Houses of Parliament, as well as the communications which his Majesty might be pleased to make to them, relative to the affairs of his kingdom, were objects absolutely foreign to all diplomatic correspondence, and upon which it was impossible for him to enter into any discussion whatever with the ministers of other courts.

This timely reproof, in all probability, prevented many similar attempts at interference in the internal concerns of this country, by

Mr. Chauvelin, who seems to have been admirably formed for a revolutionary diplomatist. In his reply to Lord Grenville, he disclaimed all intention of departing from the established rules and forms of this kingdom, and declared his only wish to be, to render the intentions of the French nation as public as possible;—in other words, to appeal from the King to the people. No further notice, however, was taken, at present, of this extrordinary mode of proceeding.

On the 25th of May, the proclamation was taken into consideration by the House of Commons, when an address was proposed by the Master of the Rolls, expressive of the indignation of the House at the attempts which had been made to weaken, in the minds of his Majesty's subjects, the sentiments of obedience to the laws, and of attachment to the form of government, civil and religious, so happily established within this realm. It further stated, and with great truth, that the advantages which, under the government of his Majesty, and his illustrious ancestors, had been derived from legal and well-regulated freedom, and the unexampled blessings actually enjoyed, afforded to his Majesty's subjects peculiar motives to reflect, with gratitude, on their present situation, and to beware of those delusive theories which were inconsistent with the relative duties of all civil society; and that it was the peculiar duty of every good citizen to discourage and counteract every attempt, direct and indirect, against public order and tranquillity. These sentiments, the Commons were confident, were the general sentiments of the nation, who must feel with them, that real liberty could only exist under the protection of law, and the authority of efficient and regular government: they had seen, by happy experience, that the mixed form of our legislature, comprehended and provided for the various interests of the community through all its several descriptions, and maintained and preserved those gradations of property and condition which furnished the great incentives to useful industry, and were equally essential to the vigour and exertion of every part, and to the stability and welfare of the whole; that they, therefore, knew that the collective strength and prosperity of the empire, its wealth, its credit, and its commerce, as well as the only security for the persons, the property, and the liberties, of

each individual, were esssentially connected with the preservation of the established constitution.

These truths, so simply, yet so strongly, expressed, and forming an admirable contrast to the metaphysical jargon of the legislative sages of revolutionary France, were followed by a solemn pledge of support to his Majesty, in all his efforts for maintaining the laws and constitution of the country, against every attempt to violate or to subvert them. To this address a long amendment was proposed by Mr. Grey, declaring, in substance, that while the Commons expressed a dutiful attachment to his Majesty's person and government, and held in abhorrence all wicked and seditious publications, they conceived the King's ministers to have been guilty of gross and criminal neglect, if they had suffered any writings, which were *proper* objects of prosecution, to circulate, for a length of time, without being noticed; and, that, ever anxious to suppress riots and tumults, they regretted deeply the disturbances at Birmingham, in the preceding summer, and suggested the expediency of bringing to punishment the aiders and abettors of those scenes of violence and outrage.

It is worthy of observation, that the sincerity of that abhorrence of all seditious publications, which was expressed in this singular amendment, might be open to some suspicions, when it was followed by a reference to the riots at Birmingham without the smallest accompanying notice of the hand-bill which gave rise to them, and which was certainly one of the most wicked and seditious publications which the brain of treason had hitherto engendered.

In the course of the debate, which followed these motions, the opposition condemned the proclamation, in terms of pointed reprobation, as intended to create a schism in the Whig Party, upon the union of which, it was gravely contended, the maintenance of the constitution, in purity and perfection, essentially depended; as having a further object in view; to prevent all attempts to procure a reform in Parliament; to vilify the associations instituted for that purpose; to provoke, rather than to suppress, riots and tumults, from which no danger was to

be apprehended, unless, from such as occurred at Birmingham; and to convert magistrates into spies and informers. The very idea of such a proclamation issuing from the King of a free people, and countenancing such a system, was declared to be alike singular and detestable. Mr. Grey indulged himself freely, in his usual strain of personal invective against Mr. Pitt, whose supreme delight, he affirmed, it was to see discord supersede harmony among those who opposed his measures, whose whole political life was a tissue of constant inconsistency, of assertion and retractation; who never proposed a measure without intending to delude his hearers, promising every thing, but performing nothing, and perpetually breaking his word with the public; who studied all the arts of courting popularity without ever intending to deserve it, and who was a complete apostate from the very commencement of his political life; whose malignity sought its gratification in the separation of the dearest friends, and whose whole conduct was one uninterrupted series of contemptuous disdain towards the rights of the people, and the privileges of the House of Commons.

This splenetic effusion of testy malevolence was treated with becoming contempt by Mr. Pitt, who coolly observed, that no invective should ever deter him from pursuing that line of conduct which he deemed most conducive to the public tranquillity, and to the preservation of constitutional freedom. In answer to the charges brought against the proclamation, and its authors, the intention of creating divisions among their political adversaries was strongly disclaimed by the ministers; and the existing schism in the opposition was justly imputed to a real difference of opinion on points of primary importance. As Lord North, the Marquis of Titchfield, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Anstruther, had spoken in support of the address, the peevishness and petulance of Mr. Grey, and his colleagues, were naturally accounted for. But a conviction of the rectitude and utility of the proclamation, of its absolute necessity to the maintenance of order, and to the tranquillity of the state, was truly considered as the only motive which had induced the gentlemen in question to abandon those friends, on the present occasion, with whom they had acted so long and so consistently; a fair and honourable line of conduct, which afforded

sufficient proof, that, whatever might be the state of parties, the great and respectable body of the House of Commons would always give up private predilections for public security.

The Ministers declared, that they had not particularly in their view, when they framed the proclamation, the Society of Friends of the People, but the different seditious societies established in various parts of the realm;—though that society would indeed be implicated, if they chose to connect themselves with other societies of such a description. The reason assigned for not prosecuting the first part of Paine's Rights of Man, was the idea, that a publication so bold, so profligate, and so absurd, could do but little mischief; but when clubs were formed for disseminating the flagitious principles which it contained, among the lower classes of people, considerable alarm was excited; and the appearance of the second part, more abandoned if possible than the first, had induced the government to resolve on its immediate prosecution. In reply to the absurd charge of converting magistrates into spies, the opposition were told, that the proclamation did no more than remind the magistrates of a duty which the laws compelled them to perform. Mr. Pitt, observing that Mr. Fox had rather ridiculed the idea of danger from the circulation of seditious doctrines, considered him, if not the declared advocate of such doctrines, in some degree, at least, a friend to them. But Mr. Fox answered, that he had no fears on the subject, because he knew that the good sense and constitutional spirit of the people would prove a sure protection against all rash and absurd theories; and he appealed, for the rectitude and purity of his political principles, to the whole tenor of his past life.—The amendment was rejected, and the address carried without a division.

As it was intended by ministers to make this a joint proceeding of the two Houses, the same address was, on the 31st of May, proposed in the House of Lords, by the Marquis of Abercorn, who charged the Society of *Friends of the People* with having erected a standard to which the disaffected, of every denomination, might resort. Mr. Grey's amendment was moved by Lord Lauderdale, and supported by the

Marquis of Lansdown. On this occasion, the Prince of Wales appeared in his place, as a Peer of the realm, and, feeling the importance of the subject, delivered his sentiments in favour of the address.—On such a subject, his Royal Highness said, he should be deficient in his duty, as a Member of Parliament, unmindful of the respect which he owed the constitution, and inattentive to the welfare, the peace, and the happiness of the people, if he did not state to the world his opinion on the present subject of deliberation. He was educated in the principles of the British Constitution, and should ever preserve its maxims; he should ever cherish a reverence for the constitutional liberties of the people; as, on those constitutional principles, uniformly carried into practice, the happiness of these realms depended, he was determined, as far as his interest could have any force, to give them his firm and constant support. The question at issue was, in fact, whether the constitution was or was not to be maintained; whether the wild ideas of untried theory were to conquer the wholesome maxims of established practice; whether those laws, under which we had flourished for such a series of years, were to be subverted by a reform unsanctioned by the people. As a person nearly and dearly interested in the welfare, and, he should emphatically add, the happiness of the people, it would be treason to the principles of his own mind, if he did not come forward and declare his disapprobation of the seditious writings which had occasioned the motion before their Lordships. His interest was connected with the interests of the people; they were so inseparable, that unless both parties concurred, the happiness of neither could exist. On this great and solid basis he grounded his vote for joining in the address which approved the proclamation. His Royal Highness, in conclusion, observed, that he existed by the love, the friendship, and the benevolence of the people, and he never would forsake their cause, so long as he lived. These sentiments did honour to the Prince, and the seasonable declaration of them exhibited a favourable specimen of his judgment.—The address was also supported by several noblemen, who had hitherto acted with the opposition.—Among these were the Duke of Portland, Earl Spencer, and the Lords Hay, Porchester, Rawdon, and Stormont. Lord Grenville declared, that the seditious societies, which had induced the proclamation, had not only dissemi-

nated the most mischievous doctrines against government, but had avowedly entered into a correspondence with foreign societies, for the worst of purposes; and had even commenced their treacherous designs, by dispersing inflammatory hand-bills in the army and navy, in the hope of exciting mutiny and disorder.—The amendment of Lord Lauderdale was negatived, and the address carried, without a division. It was made the joint address of both Houses, and, as such, was presented to his Majesty, by whom it was most graciously received.

The conduct of the Duke of Portland, and of the other noblemen, who had so long acted with Mr. Fox and his friends, in sacrificing private feelings to a sense of public duty, was most honourable, and, in the true sense of the word, *patriotic*. It was so considered by Mr. Pitt, who began to feel considerable alarm, at the rapid progress which the revolutionary doctrines were now making in England, at the increasing number of societies, established for the avowed purpose of disseminating them, and at the active industry displayed, and bold language assumed, by the partisans, and the emissaries, of faction. Impressed with these sentiments, he ardently desired to unite all the talents and integrity of the empire, in support of the laws, and in defence of the constitution; and he resolved to take an early opportunity for the adoption of such measures as were best calculated for the accomplishment of this desirable end. Meanwhile the business of Parliament was approaching to an end.—The India budget, which was opened by Mr. Dundas, with his usual clearness and ability, on the 5th of June, and which occasioned but little discussion, was the last business which occupied the attention of the Lower House. There were some bills, however, still in their progress through the Upper House; and, among those, two which afforded Lord Thurlow, the Chancellor, an opportunity for vilifying his colleagues in office, in a manner unprecedented in the history of Parliament.

Mr. Pitt's bill, for continuing the sinking fund, and for providing a new one with every future loan, was the first object of his Lordship's attack.—He represented it as exhibiting a degree of presumption and arrogance, in dictating to future Parliaments, which he trusted the

House would never countenance. It was nugatory and impracticable in his opinion; the inaptness of the project was equal to the vanity of the attempt; none but a novice, a sycophant, a mere reptile, as a Minister, would allow this act to prevent him from doing what the exigency of circumstances might require, according to his own judgment.—In the committee, so strenuous, determined, and violent, was the Chancellor's opposition, that the clauses passed only by the small majority of six.

Lord Thurlow next attacked a bill which had passed the Lower House, for encouraging the growth of timber in the New Forest.—As it was introduced late in the session, the period of its introduction was represented by his Lordship as highly indecent; and he objected to what he called the *supposed* principle of the bill, for he would not admit that it was founded on any *real* principle, as tending, *under false pretences*, to deprive the Crown of that landed property to which it was entitled by the constitutional law of the country. He maintained, that it was of consequence that the King should have an interest in the land of the kingdom. He allowed the imperfection of the forest laws, but he insisted that the defects of this bill were infinitely more pernicious.—Not content with giving this decided opinion against the bill, which, as a Member of Parliament, he had an unquestionable right to give, but which, as a Cabinet Minister, it might have been expected that he would first give in the cabinet, he attacked the framers of it, his colleagues in office, in the most pointed and most unjustifiable manner. He openly charged them with having imposed upon their Sovereign, and did not scruple to assert, that, if the members of that House, who were the hereditary counsellors of the Crown, did not interfere, in opposition to those who had advised this measure, *all was over!*

Now, it is perfectly clear, that if the Lord Chancellor, who is the supposed keeper of the King's conscience, really entertained such an opinion of any of his Majesty's official advisers, and actually believed that they had been guilty of so gross a breach of *their* duty as to impose upon his Majesty, with a view of betraying him into a measure hostile to the rights and interests of his Crown, it was *his* bounden

duty to denounce such delinquents to his Sovereign, and to call upon him to dismiss them from his councils. If the King had not chosen to follow his advice, and had, at the same time, not been able to convince his Lordship of the fallacy of his own notions, it would then have become the Chancellor to resign the seals, and to oppose the ministers and their measures in Parliament.—But if, after a measure has been discussed in the cabinet, and a majority of the members have decided in its favour, it is to be opposed in Parliament by the minority, and its framers and supporters to be attacked and reviled, all that harmony and cordial co-operation which are essential to the good government of a kingdom, would be destroyed; all vigour in action would be checked; all energy in council palsied, and the public good materially injured.

The acrimony with which Lord Thurlow had attacked the ministers, rendered it necessary for Lord Grenville to rise in vindication of himself and his colleagues, in whose names, and on whose behalf, he utterly disclaimed all intention of deluding his Sovereign, on that or on any other occasion; and expressed the greatest reverence, affection, and gratitude, to his person, as well as constitutional solicitude for the maintenance of his just prerogatives. A majority of eighteen decided in favour of the bill; but it was afterwards given up, by the ministers, for that session.—On the 15th of June, the King in person prorogued his Parliament.

It was impossible, after the extraordinary conduct of the Chancellor, that Mr. Pitt could continue to act with him.—He accordingly represented, with becoming respect, to his Majesty, the fatal consequences of such a schism in the cabinet, and the necessity under which he felt himself to request permission to retire from office, unless the seals were taken from Lord Thurlow.—The King admitted the justice of the representation, and the great seal was demanded of the Chancellor on the very day on which the prorogation of Parliament took place, when it was put into the custody of three commissioners, at the head of whom was Chief Baron Eyre.

Mr. Pitt was now, more than ever, anxious for a junction of parties, in order that the whole strength of the national councils might be directed to one object,—the security of the state against danger from abroad, and sedition at home. His anxiety was communicated to those noblemen and gentlemen of the opposition who had concurred in the measure of the proclamation; and they were given to understand, that if an union could be formed, on honourable principles, there would be no objection to include even Mr. Fox in the new arrangements. Mr. Burke was the medium through which these overtures were made; but they were rendered abortive by Mr. Fox, whose personal pique against Mr. Pitt appears to have prevailed over every sentiment of patriotism, and over all considerations of public duty.—He refused to accede to the proposed union, unless Mr. Pitt would first relinquish the situation which he held, to be placed more on a level with himself in office, and the Duke of Portland, or some other neutral person, to be appointed to the treasury. It was not to be supposed that Mr. Pitt, enjoying, as he did, the confidence of his Sovereign, of the Parliament, and of the Country, would submit, merely to gratify the pride of Mr. Fox, to relinquish that situation which had enabled him to digest, to mature, to propose, and to carry into effect, those favourite and important operations of finance, and measures of revenue, from which he expected the most beneficial results to the state; and on the success of which he hoped to found an honourable fame. It was true that Mr. Fox had, in the beginning of 1784, when the country gentlemen, at the St. Alban's Tavern, had kindly undertaken to relieve the King from the trouble of appointing his own ministers, proposed the same condition to Mr. Pitt, as an *amende honorable*, for presuming to think himself the Minister of the Crown, and not the Minister of the House of Commons. But as, on that occasion, an appeal had been made in the constitutional way, from the House to their constituents, and as the result had been decisive in favour of Mr. Pitt, it was natural to conclude, that that question, thus decided by a competent tribunal, was now at rest for ever. At all events, it must have been perfectly clear to Mr. Fox, that his political rival, so doubly fortified by the royal favour and by the popular voice, would never consent to abandon the vantage ground which he had gained, and to descend from

the high eminence on which he stood, merely to acknowledge himself in the wrong, and his opponent in the right; and so to convert the signal defeat, which Mr. Fox had sustained, into a triumph. It is scarcely possible, therefore, to believe that Mr. Fox had any sincere wish for an union of parties; and it is highly probable that he proposed a condition which he knew would be rejected, in order to evade a proposal for the rejection of which he could assign no satisfactory reason to his honourable associates. It was not, then, without justice, that his claim of perfect equality was represented as a mere artifice adopted to procure the gratification of a personal jealousy by the humiliation of the Minister, which jealousy, if it existed at all, could not fail to counteract all the advantages which it was hoped to derive from the projected coalition;—while Mr. Pitt's willingness to share with his opponents, on honourable terms, that power of which he was in full and entire possession, exhibited an unequivocal proof of his sincerity, in preferring the interests of the country to any private ends of his own. Though the negotiation was, by this means, broken off; and though it was evident, from what had passed during its existence, that no rational hope could be entertained of a cordial union of parties; a vacant blue ribband was offered to the Duke of Portland, in the most delicate manner; so as to lay his Grace under no obligation to the Minister, by his acceptance of the proffered honour. The Duke, however, thought proper to decline it, though with the most respectful and dutiful acknowledgments, until he could with satisfaction to himself take a responsible part in the King's councils.

The dismission of Lord Thurlow was by no means calculated to weaken the administration; for though his lordship was, undoubtedly, possessed of strong talents, he was of a temper so untractable, that it was scarcely possible to preserve harmony in a cabinet, of which he was a member. He had a brain particularly fertile in objections, and barren of expedients; he perpetually started obstacles to measures proposed, but never suggested, either new measures less objectionable, or any means for the removal of the difficulties which he pointed out. He was imperious, dictatorial, and arbitrary; but his character had more

of mulish obstinacy than of manly firmness in it; and the pertinacious adherence to his own opinions, which he so frequently displayed, was less the result of any fixed principles, than the operation of a certain dogmatical vanity, acting upon a churlish temper, wholly unaccustomed to the salutary influence of a controlling judgment. Though his *professions* bespoke resolution, his *conduct* was neither decisive nor consistent. Of the contrast which they sometimes exhibited, indeed, his negotiations at Carleton House, and his speeches in the Senate, on the subject of the Regency, afforded a signal and memorable instance. —On the present occasion too, there was reason to believe, that his difference with the cabinet was far from being limited to the two bills which he chose to make the public ground of it in the House. For if the sentiments which he did not scruple, at a subsequent period to avow, respecting the seditious societies in England, were the real sentiments of his mind, he must have thought the proclamation an unnecessary, and, consequently, an unwise and impolitic measure.*—It was his duty, therefore, openly to declare his sentiments, since he thought it necessary to declare any difference of opinion between himself and his colleagues, and to make that strong, prominent, and important measure, the ostensible ground of his opposition to those with whom he had continued to sit in the cabinet, as it ought to have been an efficient reason for his resignation.†

On considering all the occurrences in the political world, during the present session, the schism in the opposition, arising from a radical difference on a point of primary importance, both as affecting our foreign relations, and our dometic arrangements, and every other

* I have myself heard his lordship, in private company, ridicule the idea of danger to be apprehended from the establishment of such societies, whose means of mischief he considered as too contemptible for notice. And when the successful efforts of the revolutionary party in France, apparently still more inadequate to the accomplishment of the proposed end, were suggested to him, he refused to admit the validity of the reason, or to depart, in any degree, from his pre-conceived opinion.

† It has been observed of Lord Thurlow, that he was a *pollard* at *Norwood*, but a *willow* at *St. James's*.

transaction connected with that topic, it appears that the power and influence of Mr. Pitt had been rather confirmed than shaken, strengthened than diminished, by the mixed moderation and firmness of his conduct; and that he stood equally high in the confidence of the Sovereign and the esteem of the nation.

CHAPTER XIX.

Unsettled state of the Continent—Affairs of Poland—Salutary changes in her Constitution—Patriotic conduct of the King, and of the first Orders of the State—Approved by Prussia and Austria—Condemned by Russia—Arrival of a French Envoy at Warsaw—Consequent Confusion—Change in the sentiments of Austria and Prussia—Cause of it—Unprincipled conduct of the Empress Catharine—Difference between the Polish and the French Revolutions—Falsehood of the Russian Declaration exposed—Confuted by the Poles—A Russian Army enters Poland—The new Constitution is destroyed—Murder of the King of Sweden—Affairs of France—Meeting of the new Assembly—Increased Influence of the Jacobins—Impolicy of the first Assembly—Its Consequence—Composition of the Legislative Assembly—Power of the Constitutionalists annihilated—The Members of the Assembly swear fidelity to the King and the Constitution—Insult the King and resolve to shew him no marks of respect—The King's resolution scrupulously to observe and maintain the Constitution—His remarks respecting it—The Queen's sentiments congenial with those of the King—The King refuses his sanction to two Decrees, for declaring all Emigrants Traitors, and for robbing the Non-juring Priests of their Salaries—Seditious Addresses presented to the Assembly, by which they are encouraged—Massacres at St. Domingo—The Massacres of the Whites defended by *the Friends of the Blacks*—Massacres at Avignon defended by Bazire and by a Calvinistic Minister—Warlike disposition of the Assembly—Their hostile language and aggressive conduct—Violent speech of Isnard—Address to the King—Anacharsis Clootz recommends a general Revolution of the neighbouring States (including England) to the Assembly—Memorable Answer of the President—Brissot insists on the policy of War—Insulting Manifesto issued—Addresses of some seditious Dutchmen, and of certain obscure Englishmen, favourably received by the Assembly—Similar address from Liege and the Austrian Netherlands—The Assembly encourages Rebellion in those States—Prudent and Pacific conduct of the German Princes—Brissot again insists on the necessity of War—Death of the Emperor Leopold—The Assembly compel the King to propose a Declaration of War against Austria, which they vote by *acclamation*—Object of the Brissotin Faction in promoting War—Difference between them and the immediate followers of Robespierre—They concur in their object, but differ as to the means of obtaining it—Annexation of Avignon and the Comtat to France—Commencement of Hostilities in Flanders—Cowardly flight of the French Troops from Tournay—They murder their General, Theobald Dillon—Acts of Atrocious Barbarity—Flight of the French Troops in the neighbourhood of Mons—Change of Ministers—Manifestoes of Austria and Prussia—Brissot writes a Libel on the King—The Ministers refuse to prosecute him—M. Bertrand resigns—Narbone is dismissed—A Brissotin Ministry formed—Progress of Anarchy—Persecution of Non-juring Priests—Horrible acts of Barbarity—Influ-

ence of the Press in the destruction of the Monarchy—Treasonable Speech of Isnard in the Assembly—Remarks on it—Decree for suppressing the King's Guard—Impeachment of the Duke de Brissac—Treacherous conduct of the Ministers—Decrees for forming a Camp of 20,000 Jacobins—and for banishing the Non-juring Priests—The King refuses to sanction them—Inconsistent conduct of Dumourier on this occasion—Addresses threatening the Life of the King—Well received by the Assembly—Insurrection of the 20th of June—The King's opinion of that Event—Expects to be murdered—Refuses to quit the Capital—Attempt to assassinate the Queen—The Assassin rescued—Atrocious conduct of the Federates—Fresh Plots—Addresses from the Sections demanding the Deposition of the King—Conspiracy of the 10th of August—The King and Queen made Prisoners—Committed to the Temple—Judicial Murders—Atrocious opinion of Helen Maria Williams—Inhuman Massacre of the Priests, on the first days of September—A wretch murders his own Parents, and carries their heads in triumph to the Jacobin Club—Sketch of Military Affairs—The allied Armies enter France—Their dilatory movements—Crooked policy of the King of Prussia—Suspension of Hostilities—Treacherous conduct of the Prussian Monarch to the French Emigrants—Different accounts of the respective numbers of the hostile Armies—False Assertions of General Arthur Dillon—Retreat of the Allies from the territory of France.

[1792.] A great part of the continent of Europe, during this period, exhibited a scene which could not fail to attract the attention, to interest the feelings, and to excite the apprehensions, of those nations which did not take an immediate part in it, but which must have perceived, that, in its proximate or remote consequences, it was calculated to affect them all. In Poland, a country always bordering on a state of anarchy, and subject to the undue influence of the neighbouring powers, the efforts of a patriot King, and of a nobility and clergy, prepared to make every sacrifice for the promotion of the public welfare, were rendered abortive, when exerted for the laudable end of meliorating the condition of every class of the people, by the unjust and unwarrantable interposition of Prussia and Russia. The latter power, in particular, whose ambition carried her to the most unjustifiable lengths, assumed a tone of command, and a conduct correspondent therewith, utterly incompatible with the independence of the state to which it was addressed. The alterations which the Poles made, in the internal government of their country, affected only themselves, and were adopted with the free consent of all the parties who had authority to adopt them.—They were the result of no arbitrary assumption of power, either by the King or by any class of his subjects; but were the fruits of the combined and deliberative wisdom of the con-

stitutional representatives of the nation; and were not, in any degree, calculated, either by their influence or example, to excite commotions in the neighbouring states, or to afford any reasonable ground of offence or uneasiness to their rulers.* There existed, therefore, no pretext for interposition, except what arose out of views too unjust to acknowledge, and out of designs too dishonourable to reveal.

The principal change thus effected in the constitution of Poland, was the substitution of an *hereditary* for an *elective* monarchy;—a change highly favourable to national independence, constitutional stability, and social order. The destined successor of Stanislaus was the Elector of Saxony, a prince to whom no rational objection could be raised by any one. The King communicated the result of this bloodless revolution to the Emperor Leopold, and to the King of Prussia, both of whom expressed their general approbation of the event, and their particular congratulations on the wise choice which had been made of a successor. The Empress of Russia, however, indignant at every attempt to remove the shackles which she had imposed on this devoted country, openly expressed her high displeasure at the presumption of its King and its representatives, in their resolution to assert their own independence, to consult their own happiness, and to act for themselves.—The rebellious nobles of Poland, who would not submit to a curtailment of their own power for the general good, she assembled around her in the capital of her Empire.

Nothing could exceed the wisdom, temperance, and judgment, displayed by Stanislaus throughout the whole of these events.—He encouraged the timid, he restrained the violent, he was the first to make sacrifices, and the last to claim privileges or power. But the

* This observation is, perhaps, liable to one exception;—for, in a part of the constitution, there was an indirect invitation to the peasantry of surrounding states, to seek, in Poland, for that freedom which they were not suffered to enjoy in their own country.—It proclaimed "a perfect and entire liberty to all people, who may either be newly coming from whatever part of the world to settle, or who, having emigrated, shall return to their native country." But it is worthy of remark, that the Empress of Russia had issued a similar edict, in 1766; she, therefore, had no right to object to a measure of which she had furnished the example herself. Still the article was objectionable and ought to have been rescinded.

arrival of a minister plenipotentiary from France, a M. Descorches, who was lately the Marquis de Sainte-Croix, but who seemed to have lost his honour with his title, and who had become a furious jacobin, gave courage to the few violent and factious men at Warsaw, who wished to avail themselves of the present disposition to change, in order totally to subvert the constitution, and to introduce a new order of things after the French model. Against these, Stanislaus had set his face; but, having formed themselves into a club, and assumed the appellation of "The Friends of the Constitution of the third of May," 1791, Descorches paid his court to them, increased their rage for innovation, and stimulated them to proceed to extremities, that they might rival France, in infamy, degradation, and wretchedness. The prudence of the King, however, defeated their efforts, in a great degree, though, through their influence, one measure was carried, which gave great disgust to the nobility; this was the sale of the starosties, or fiefs, of the Crown, by which the power, both of the Crown and of the aristocracy, was considerably abridged. The new constitution was confirmed by the Dietines, which assembled in the spring of 1792, and the popular voice was decidedly in its favour.

Nothing, therefore, was wanting to insure its stability, but the support, or even acquiescence, of the neighbouring states. But, before the commencement of the year 1792, a material change had taken place in the situation of Europe, and in the sentiments of Austria and Prussia. The rapid progress of French principles had excited a well-founded alarm in the minds of all the continental powers. The Emperor of Germany, and the King of Prussia, were the first to express their apprehensions of the rising danger, and the Empress of Russia had lately warned her subjects, emphatically and successfully, against the fatal contagion. These apprehensions had led the two first of these powers to dread any, and every, change, in the constitutions of adjoining states; to regard the cry of liberty as the watchword of insurrection; and, consequently, to extend their fears to the late Revolution in Poland, which, till now, they had viewed with a favourable eye. The Imperial Catharine, who, in her late proclamation against French principles, had artfully asserted, that they "would

soon ruin Poland," would have been equally hostile to the new Polish constitution, if the French Revolution had never occurred. Every thing which tended to give stability and permanence to the government of that unhappy country, and, consequently, every thing which went to establish its perfect independence on foreign Potentates, was certain to incur the most marked opposition on the part of the Empress, because they were calculated to disappoint her ambitious hopes, and to frustrate her unprincipled plans of conquest and aggrandizement.—Her hatred of French principles was natural, but she afforded not the smallest proofs of its sincerity; for, while she anxiously stimulated other powers to take up arms against France, she never contributed, herself, a single man, or a single ruble, to the support of that cause which she affected to have so much at heart.—But Catharine had too much sagacity not to perceive, that the new constitution of Poland differed, most essentially and radically, from the Revolution in France, in every one of its features,—in its object, its end, its means, and its principle.—Her dread, therefore, of the effects of French principles, in Poland, was assumed, for the purpose of giving a colour to the most unjust and tyrannical interposition in the internal concerns of an independent state, which unprincipled despotism ever enforced or attempted. Not one of the reasons urged, and successfully urged, in justification of the interposition of foreign powers, in the transactions of the French government, an interposition justified by all the sound writers on the law of nations, and on the paramount principle of self-preservation, could, by the most forced construction, or the most ingenious sophistry, be made to apply to the temperate, quiet, wise, and just alteration which had taken place in the constitution of Poland. But Catharine's plans were suggested by her ambition, regulated by her interest, and executed by her power.—Her will was absolute.——*Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*, was not her *motto*, but the *rule of her conduct*, and *the principle of her government*.

She had long resolved that Poland should not be free, should no be independent; and she now determined to destroy, by force, what, in vain, she assailed by argument. On the 18th of May, her Envoy,

at the Court of Poland, Mr. Von Bulgakow, delivered a declaration to the Diet, by order of his Sovereign, couched in the most insolent and most insulting terms. Catharine did not scruple to make the partial change in their own constitution, without consulting her pleasure, the subject of complaint and reproach to the Poles. The advocate for monarchy in France; she did not blush to avow herself the champion of republicanism in Poland;—an absolute sovereign herself; she did not hesitate to reprobate "the union of power in one single hand as utterly incompatible with republican principles." In possession of an hereditary throne, she dared to tax, as an *audacious violation* of the laws, the conversion of the elective throne of Poland into an hereditary throne;—and, lastly, while she punished, with the most rigorous severity, every reflection of her subjects upon her own government, she openly encouraged the seditious and rebellious Poles, and appealed from the lawful rulers of the state to the people!—In short, a more flagrant, outrageous, and unprincipled interposition in the internal polity of a foreign state, history does not exhibit.

In this declaration, too, which it is impossible to characterize in terms of adequate strength, she accused all those Poles who had sworn obedience to the new constitution, and who formed, at least, nine-tenths of the whole population of the country, with perjury; and she expressed her resolution to send an army into Poland, for the purpose of restoring, by force, the ancient order of things. The King of Prussia, at the same time, determined to remain neuter, though in direct violation of an existing treaty with Poland, concluded in 1790; and the Emperor of Germany adopted the same line of conduct;—so that Catharine had now nothing to fear but from the unequal efforts of a people, whom she exerted every art to divide. Indeed, she had prudently forborne to publish this hostile paper, until she was apprized of the declaration of war, by the National Assembly of France, against Austria, which was made on the 20th of April, and which reached Vienna on the 30th.

The Polish government had no difficulty in confuting the fallacies and the falsehoods which the Russian Empress had stooped to adopt

in the declaration of her minister.—Their answer was firm, temperate, and dignified; and an animated address, from the King to his subjects, was published about the same time, which produced the desired effect.—But the ability to make the necessary preparations for opposing so powerful an enemy was by no means equal to the public spirit which prevailed. The Empress poured one formidable body of troops into the Ukraine, and another into Lithuania;—in neither place was there any force adequate to a successful resistance. The Poles, however, notwithstanding their inferiority, fought bravely and skilfully; but numbers soon prevailed over courage, and, in less than two months, the Russians, having advanced to within three days march of the Capital, compelled the King to save his Throne, by consenting to the abolition of the new constitution. This compulsory act took place on the 23d of July, when an armistice was immediately concluded, and the command of the Polish troops was consigned to a Russian General.

During the exhibition of this disgraceful scene in Poland, Sweden had been the theatre of another exhibition, not less disgraceful, and still more atrocious. Gustavus, the heroic monarch of that country, who had taken a deep interest in the fate of the unhappy King of France, and who had it in contemplation to lead a body of six and thirty thousand Swedes and Russians into his territories, in order to co-operate with the allies, for restoring him to liberty, was assassinated, on the 16th of March, 1792, at a masquerade at the Opera-House, in Stockholm, by a person named Ankerstrom, who had formerly been an officer of the guards, and who was one of a band of conspirators who had taken offence at some part of the public conduct of the King, and had long had this deed in contemplation. The King met his death with the firmness, resignation, and temper of a Christian.—With his dying breath, he pardoned the traitors who had deprived him of life, except the immediate perpetrator of the deed, who, on the representation of the destined regent, the Duke of Sudermania, was reserved as a victim to offended justice. This Prince, who possessed many great and heroic qualities, had rendered his country infinite service, by curtailing the power of a corrupt and turbulent nobility, by

increasing the comforts of his people, and by shaking off the degrading yoke of dependence, in which the Russian Autocrate had long kept the Court and Cabinet of Stockholm. The tears of the virtuous and the good consecrated the memory of Gustavus, while it was further honoured by the loud exultations which the leaders of the French Revolution manifested at his premature death.

After the dissolution of the National, or Constituent, Assembly of France, already noticed in a preceding Chapter, the first fruits of the new constitution, which was represented as pregnant with liberty and happiness to every class and denomination of people, were—the increased persecution of the non-juring clergy, (or rather of the clergy who remained faithful to their oaths, true to their conscience, and firm to their duty;) and the complete triumph of the Jacobin faction. This triumph was evinced in their successful efforts to secure a decisive majority in the new assembly. At Paris, their success was complete. Brissot, one of their leaders, and Garan de Coulon, a lawyer, and his friend, were among the members returned. And although, by one of the last acts of the first assembly, all clubs were severely prohibited, it now became evident that France would, very soon, be subjected to the absolute dominion of the Jacobin Societies.

Among many other absurdities which the National Assembly had committed, was a resolution which they adopted, in order, no doubt, to afford the public a proof of the *humility* of men, who had for two years usurped the legislative and executive power, that none of their own body should be qualified to sit in the next assembly. This was a direct attack on that *Sovereignty of the People* which they had professed to make the corner-stone of their new constitutional fabric, since it deprived the people of their right to choose such representatives as they most approved. Had this, however, been the only objection to it, the nation would have had little cause for lamentation; but it had the fatal effect of excluding from the new legislative body, all those men who had most experience in the science of legislation, and many who were best qualified, and most willing, to preserve their country from the ruin which threatened it.

The composition of the new Assembly was admirably calculated to forward the views of those, who, like Brissot, made no scruple to avow their wish for the total abolition of the kingly power. It exhibited a motley mixture of briefless barristers, renegade priests, needy journalists, and seditious pamphleteers. It was any thing, in short, but a representation of property; for it has been asserted, with equal confidence and truth, that not forty of the members were in the possession of a clear annual income of one hundred pounds. The constitutionalists, who were a middle-party, between the Royalists and the Jacobins, a set of men who endeavoured to establish a regular government on the principles of anarchy, and who wished for *a King and no King*, or for a King in name but not in power, had sunk into general contempt, and in vain endeavoured to preserve the last relics of their influence, in the Club of the Feuillans.

It was clear that the popular talents of Brissot, combining with his popular principles, would give him a decided superiority in the Assembly. And as he had taken no pains to conceal his republican principles, his hatred of monarchy, and his warlike notions, it was not difficult to anticipate the line of policy, as well internal as external, which would be enforced and adopted. Having verified their powers, the members declared themselves a legislative National Assembly; they took the oath to live free or die, and solemnly swore "to maintain, to the utmost of their power, the constitution of the kingdom, decreed by the constituent National Assembly, during the years 1789, 1790, and 1791; to propose and assent to nothing in the course of that legislature, which might at all tend to infringe it; and to be, in every respect, faithful to the nation, the law, and the King." That it was never the intention of a great number of those who took this oath to observe it, and that they thus voluntarily perjured themselves, their subsequent conduct too plainly demonstrated. Their very first act displayed their determination to insult and degrade the King, who formed an essential part of the constitution, and to whom, also, they had sworn fidelity. Having deputed sixty of their members, with M. Ducastel at their head, to inform the King that the assembly was opened, the next day was fixed by the keeper of the seals for receiving

the deputation.—But contrary to all established rules, Ducastel insisted on immediate admission, when he thus drily addressed his Sovereign :—" Sire, the National Legislative Assembly is definitively constituted ;—it has deputed us to inform your Majesty of it." This laconic address was sufficiently republican, it would seem; yet did it not satisfy the assembly, who censured Ducastel for using the offensive terms,—*Sire* and *Majesty*. They next resolved to change the mode in which the King had been hitherto received by the Assembly, when he had occasion to repair to it.—A chair of state placed above that on which their President was seated, appeared too great a mark of distinction, to those Republicans, to be conferred on their Sovereign. Messrs. Couthon, Guadet, and Goupillau, a triumvirate of Jacobin lawyers, (the two first of whom afterwards met the fate which they had long deserved, and, by an instance of retributive justice, not unfrequent in the course of this surprising Revolution, perished on the very scaffold to which they had consigned the Monarch to whom they had sworn allegiance,) were the leading orators on this occasion.—The first of these started the objection to the use of the words,—*Sire* and *Majesty* ; and the last thought, that it was beneath the dignity of the President to bow to the King. A decree was, in consequence, passed, the object of which was to render his Majesty's reception more conformable to the Republican notions of these legislative sages.—This decree, however, was reserved for further consideration, in consequence of the alarm which it excited, and the efforts of the least violent party in the Assembly to oppose it. It is still worthy of notice, as a direct proof of the sentiments and principles, not only entertained, but avowed without scruple, at this early period of the Legislative Assembly.

But the King had completely made up his mind as to the line of conduct which he would, steadily and uniformly, pursue. He was resolved, that no insults, however pointed, no treatment, however unworthy, should provoke him to the commission of any act which could, by malice itself, be construed into a breach of the constitution, which he had sworn to maintain. At the first interview which M. Bertrand de Moleville, who was now appointed Minister of the Marine, had with his Majesty, on the 1st of October, he pressed the King for

an explanation of his sentiments on the new constitution, and of the conduct which he expected his Ministers to observe in regard to it. The King's answer was clear and positive, and such as left no doubt as to his real intentions.—"I am far," said the unhappy Monarch, "from regarding this constitution as a *chef-d'œuvre*.—I believe that there are great faults in it; and that if I had been allowed to state my observations upon it, some advantageous alterations might have been adopted. But of this there is no question at present; I have sworn to maintain it, such as it is, and I am determined, as I ought, to be strictly faithful to my oath; for it is my opinion, that an exact execution of the constitution is the best means of making it thoroughly known to the nation, who will then perceive the changes proper to be made.—I have not, and I cannot have, any other plan than this.—I certainly shall not recede from it; and I wish my Ministers to conform to it."

To the inquiry whether the Queen's sentiments were the same as his Majesty's, the King answered, "Yes, perfectly.—She will tell you so herself." M. Bertrand then went to the Queen, who said, "The King has informed you of his intentions relative to the constitution. Don't you think that the only plan he has to follow is to adhere to the oath?" M. Bertrand having answered in the affirmative, her Majesty added, "Well, be assured that nothing shall make us alter our resolution.—*Allons*, be of good courage, M. Bertrand; with a little patience, firmness, and consistency of conduct, I hope that you will find that all is not yet lost." *

But whatever respect the Royal Family might be disposed to pay to the new constitution, the Members of the Assembly were determined to render it perfectly subservient to their own ultimate views. Measure after measure was adopted, decree after decree was passed, the end and object of which were to insult the King, in the tenderest part, and to wound not only his *feelings* but his *conscience*. It was not his own *ministers*, however, who pointed the dart which inflicted this wound; but the determined enemies of the Altar and the Throne.

* Bertrand's Private Memoirs. Vol. II. p. 215—217.

The Assembly did not blush to call upon him to give his sanction to one decree for declaring his most loyal subjects, and even his own brothers, nephews, and cousins, *traitors*;—and to another which went to deprive the non-juring priests of the scanty pittance which the plunderers of the Church had assigned them, as stipendiaries of the state. But neither threats nor persuasions could induce Louis the Sixteenth to become a partner in acts of cruelty and injustice, from which his soul revolted. He availed himself of the right which the constitution had vested in him, and refused his sanction.

This firmness, on the part of the King, enraged the factious members of the Assembly, and the ruffian leaders of the Parisian mob. Addresses were poured in from the turbulent inhabitants of the suburbs, couched in language the most seditious and treasonable, which were received by the Assembly, not merely with silence, but with approbation.—"King, ministers, generals," said one of the orators, "be warned;—you are placed between the altar and the scaffold;—make your choice." The President of these legislators had the profligacy to praise "*the sublime patriotism*" of this preacher of assassination, and to exhort him to persevere in his sentiments! Another orator observed, that "the sanction of a people is far superior to that of a King."—And the members themselves promulgated similar principles, though not precisely in the same language; and, perfectly regardless of their oath to preserve the constitution inviolate, they did not scruple to assert, that the King ought, in particular cases, to be deprived of his *veto!*

It required very little sagacity or foresight to perceive the obvious intention, as well as the direct tendency, of all these speeches and addresses.—The ruin of the monarchy was resolved on by the Jacobin party, which was now predominant, and which included, at this period, both Robespierre and Brissot, who, though hateful to each other, still had the same object in view, and co-operated for the production of the same end. The new principles of liberty which had been imported into Saint Domingo, and of which Brissot, the leader of the *Amis des Noirs*, was the grand patron, had already produced their natural effects. —Towards the close of the year 1791, the Assembly received accounts

of the massacres of the Whites by the Blacks, which had begun by the assassination of those masters who had displayed the greatest kindness and humanity in the treatment of their slaves; and of the total desolation of a great part of that fruitful and valuable colony. Brissot undertook the defence of these patriots, who had acted on the pure principles of philosophy and liberty, which M. Bazire (another jacobin lawyer, and a tool of Robespierre, who, when he had no further occasion for his services, consigned him to the scaffold) asserted were *affronted*, by the representations of a deputy from Saint Domingo, who described the enormities which had been committed in the island. Although excess of philanthropy had always been imputed to these *Friends of the Blacks*, Brissot, on the present occasion, displayed the most stoical insensibility to the sufferings of the murdered and plundered *Whites*.—"Millions of Indians," exclaimed this philanthropist, "have perished on that land of blood!—At every step you crush under your feet the bones of those inhabitants whom nature gave to these countries, and *yet you shudder while you hear the deeds of their avengers.*" He asserted that, in this contention of guilt, *the crimes of the white men were the most horrible!*

Another opportunity occurred, about the same time, for setting the philanthropy of M. Bazire in a strong point of view.—The horrible massacres at Avignon, under the direction of *Jourdan, the cut-throat*, had been forced on the attention of the Assembly. A. M. Deleutre, who came from Avignon, to relate all the particulars of those horrible transactions to the Assembly, could scarcely obtain a hearing. Bazire, the advocate of philosophy and liberty, the strenuous *Ami des Noirs*, insulted and reviled him; and he was supported, in this laudable attempt, by M. de Lasource, a Calvinist minister, and a Brissotine, who, in the preceding discussion, had reprobated M. Blanchelande, the Governor of Saint Domingo, and the regular troops acting under him, in suppressing the rebellion of the Blacks, as *assassins and enemies of the constitution*; and who now insisted that Jourdan (who had been imprisoned on a charge of murder, and was actually on his trial) should be liberated; and that a general amnesty should be extended to him,

and to his accomplices.—And, to the eternal disgrace of the Assembly, a motion to that effect was carried.

Next to the ardent desire of insulting the King, and of annihilating royalty, the most prominent feature visible in the proceedings of the Assembly, was a marked hostility to foreign powers, and a declared wish for war. Towards the end of November, 1791, they took into consideration the collection of emigrants, in the neighbouring states of Germany, and called upon the King to insist on their immediate dispersion. But, although the King had even anticipated their wishes upon the subject, and had succeeded in his endeavours to obtain the object of their desires, yet, when he communicated his success to the Assembly, during their debates, the members, far from giving him credit for what he had done, still continued to censure "the apathy and torpor of the executive power." The fact was, that they did not want any step to be taken that was likely, in its consequences, to prevent a war; and, in a debate, on the 27th of November, M. Ruhl (a jacobin, who, in 1795, committed suicide, in order to escape execution) did not hesitate to represent war as highly desirable to the French; and another jacobin, Isnard, expressed his conviction, that war "*would change the face of the world, and subvert the surrounding thrones.*"—This was precisely the object which Brissot, and all the Jacobins, had in view; and all their efforts were now directed to its attainment. A short extract from the speech of this Isnard (who was a *perfumer*, at Draguignon, and who, after voting for the deposition and death of the King, and betraying, on all occasions, a most sanguinary disposition, joined the Girondists in their quarrel with the Jacobins, and, unfortunately, escaped, by flight, the just reward of his crimes) will fully display the spirit which now prevailed in the Legislative Assembly.

"Let us elevate ourselves to the height of our mission; let us speak to the Ministers, to the King, and to Europe, with that firmness which becomes us;—let us say to Ministers, that they must take their choice between public gratitude and the vengeance of the laws, and that *by the word responsibility, we mean death.*—Let us say to the King, that it

is his interest to defend the constitution; that he only reigns *by* the people, and for the people; that the nation is *his sovereign*, and that he is subject to the law. To Europe let us say, that the French people, if they draw the sword, will throw away the scabbard; that they will only seek to crown it with the laurels of victory; and that if, in spite of their power and courage, they should fail in defending their liberty, their enemies shall only reign over dead bodies.—Let us likewise say to Europe, that if the cabinets engage Kings in a war against the people, *we will engage the people in a war against Kings.*—Let us say to her, that, from the moment when the armies of our enemies contend with our own, *the light of philosophy will strike their eyes, the people will embrace each other in the face of dethroned tyrants*, earth will be consoled, and Heaven appeased."

An address to the King, conformable to these sentiments, was unanimously voted, and his Majesty was pressed to insist, in more peremptory terms than had yet been employed, on the immediate dispersion of the emigrants, in Germany. He was likewise ordered (for the instructions were imperative) to collect troops, on the frontiers, to support his demands, and even to degrade himself by the use of a revolutionary threat, *to carry liberty*, that is to say, rebellion, into the heart of Germany, and to call upon Princes to calculate the consequence to be feared from the alarm of nations.

Soon after, the orator of the human race, Anacharsis Clootz, was again brought forward on the revolutionary stage.—In a furious rhapsody, equally worthy of himself and of his audience, he called on the Assembly to abandon the petty warfare in which they were about to engage, and to enter into a general contest with existing thrones;—"Let us strike every where, or no where," was the philanthropic advice of this consistent monitor, who recommended the diffusion of revolutionary principles, as the most destructive instruments which the French could wield. Germany, Holland, and England, were specifically included in his vast plan of emancipation, and he consoled himself with the reflection, that, if the French should fail to accomplish

their laudable object, they would at least enjoy the supreme satisfaction of contemplating a general bankruptcy.

Far from disapproving either the spirit or the letter of this harangue, the president of the Assembly assured M. Clootz, "That the Assembly received, with due acknowledgments, the homage of his opinions, convinced, whatever determination circumstances might induce it to adopt, that *France held the political key of all Europe.*" And so much in unison with the feelings of the members, and so flattering to the vanity of the people, were these monstrous principles, and outrageous opinions, that both the orator's address, and the president's answer, were ordered to be printed. Farther to evince the insincerity of their renunciation of all conquests, and the little inclination which they had to abide by the decree which proclaimed it, the Assembly did not scruple, in their King's presence, to declare, that the whole extent of country, including, of course, a considerable portion of territory belonging to foreign princes, from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, from the Alps to the ocean, should be protected by the superintendance of a good King, and by the rampart of a faithful people! It is of consequence to observe the exact conformity of this declaration, made so early as the 14th of December 1791, with the pretensions so openly avowed, and so resolutely asserted, at a subsequent period, respecting the *natural boundaries* of France, the Rhine, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the ocean!

The subject was renewed on the 29th of December, when Brissot and Condorçet both spoke in favour of war. "There must," said the former, "be war;—it is necessary for France,—for her honour, for her safety, *for the re-establishment of her finances*, and her *public credit.*" It is perfectly clear that the object of such a war must be *conquest and plunder*, because, by no other means could war possibly conduce to the restoration of national prosperity and credit, which, in general, it has a natural tendency to impair. A manifesto was accordingly issued, in which a marked distinction was drawn between the *governors* and the *governed*, and in which also Kings were grossly insulted, by the sarcastic

remark, and indirect threat, that "The men who presume to call themselves the masters of other men, will have nothing to dread from France, but the influence of her example."*

The object of such debates, and of such manifestoes, cannot be mistaken when it is known that, previous to this period, the King's interposition had been effectual, and the emigrants had been actually dismissed from the states of the German princes, bordering on France. But while the revolutionary legislators were thus loud in their complaints, and violent in their invectives, against foreign powers, for a *pretended* interposition in the internal concerns of France, they did not scruple to countenance, and to encourage, the rebels and traitors of the neighbouring states. A small body of Dutchmen having appeared at the bar of the Assembly, on the 19th of January, 1792, inveighed against the Stadtholder, and proposed measures for subverting the lawful government of their country; they were favourably received by the president, who hailed them as *allies of the French people*, and even inserted their address in the minutes of the day.

An obscure society of Englishmen, who held their meetings at an alehouse in Frith Street, and who assumed to themselves the appellation of *the London Constitutional Whigs*, were received by the Assembly with equal distinction, when they generously devoted themselves, their lives, and their fortunes, to the defence of the French, in case they should be threatened by the arms of despotism. Not only was this address inserted in the minutes of the day, and formally communicated to the King, but the president was specially ordered to return a written answer, in which he informed the patriots of Frith Street, in the name, and with the approbation, of the Assembly, which obligingly styled them, "*The soundest part of the English nation,—the opposition of England,*—and even *England itself;*—that *the inviolable treaty* which virtue *alone* had negotiated, was simple as truth, eternal as reason."

* See the manifesto of the French nation, decreed by the National Assembly, Dec. 29, 1791, and ordered to be delivered, by the Ministers, to all the courts of Europe, among the State Papers, in Rivington's Annual Register for 1792, p. 206, 207.

A similar reception was afforded to a larger body of rebels from Liege and the Austrian Netherlands, who were allowed to hold public meetings at Paris, and to pass the most violent resolutions against their own legitimate Sovereigns. These men published a declaration in the month of January, in which they bound themselves to shake off the intolerable yoke under which their countrymen groaned, and to expel the tyrants who oppressed them. And the patriots of Liege afterwards denounced their Prince-Bishop as a traitor to his country, and as a perjured assassin, whom they swore to prosecute until they should bring him to justice for his crimes.

More marked indications of a hostile and aggressive spirit; of that determination, in short, "to brave Europe," which Brissot and his followers had early adopted, could not possibly be exhibited. But the conduct of the German princes was not at all calculated to afford the desired pretext for hostilities. The emigrants being dispersed, it became necessary to find another subject of complaint;—and the concert of princes against the liberties of France was fixed upon as the most likely to operate forcibly on the passions of the multitude. In vain, however, did M. de Noailles, the French ambassador at Vienna, goad Prince Kaunitz, in order to extort from him some confession or remark which might be seized upon as the ground of war.—That able, wary, and cautious statesman, was superior both in talents and integrity to the Gallic cabinet; and, while he peremptorily disclaimed all hostile views, on the part of the Emperor, he depicted in strong, but true colours, the nefarious conduct of the French Jacobins, in the Assembly, who had virtually declared war against all the powers of Europe. M. Delessart, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, read to the Assembly a note from the Emperor to the Elector of Treves, in proof of his Imperial Majesty's pacific intentions.—In this note, the Elector, who had claimed the protection of the chief of the empire against the threatened attack of his territory by France, was informed, that the promised protection was only conditional, and would not be granted, unless the Elector should have dispersed all the emigrants in his dominions, and have conformed himself, in every respect, to the laws of amity and good neighbourhood. But neither this unequivocal proof of

a friendly disposition, nor a subsequent communication from Delessart, who read dispatches from the French Minister at Treves, stating the total dispersion of the emigrants in the Electorate, could deter Brissot, and his satellites, from urging the immediate adoption of hostile measures against the Emperor. In a speech of Brissot's at the latter end of January, 1792, he insisted on the necessity of a declaration of war: the reasons which he assigned, for imputing to the Emperor an enmity which he positively disavowed, are curious, and truly worthy the philanthropic friend of the Blacks, who could coolly recommend, as a salutary expedient, to "set fire to the four corners of Europe."

"The nature of your enemy's hate," said Brissot, "must not be concealed, if you wish to measure its extent. *Your Constitution is an eternal anathema against all absolute Thrones.* ALL KINGS *must hate your constitution: it brings them to trial; it pronounces their sentence.* * It seems to say to each of them, 'to-morrow thou shalt be no more;' or, 'thou shalt be a King of the people's creation.' This truth has sunk deep into the heart of Leopold; he strives to ward off the fatal moment; and such is the secret of his hatred for the French nation, and the protection which he has granted to the Emigrants and to the Electors; and of the league of Kings whom he endeavours to excite against us. No; it is not the French nobility, that he would re-establish; it is not the prerogative of a political phantom which he wishes to defend;—*Leopold fears for his throne. It is his throne that he endeavours to maintain, by a vain league against the torrent of the spirit of liberty.*"

Brissot deprecated all further explanation with the Emperor as per-

* It is not incurious to observe, that, in one sentence, Brissot confines *the constitutional anathema* to *absolute* Monarchs, while, in the very next sentence, he extends it to *all Kings*. The fact is, the first *qualification* was only introduced for the purpose of obviating the charge of making his remark so general as to include the *French Throne*, and the *French King*; and consequently, of representing the constitution as essentially hostile to *monarchy*, which in truth it was. In endeavouring to accuse the Emperor, Brissot completely justifies him, by acknowledging that his fears, lest French principles, and French intrigues, should endanger his throne, were perfectly just.

fectly unnecessary; and represented the revolution of the Netherlands as the consequence of the war; while Upper Austria presented an easy conquest to the French troops; while Spain was too much distressed to oppose their efforts; and while *the people of England would offer up prayers for the success of France, which they knew would be one day their own.* It was very easy to perceive, that while this spirit prevailed in the Assembly, in which, *in fact*, both the legislative and the executive power were vested, there was little prospect of any favourable issue to the efforts which the King might make for the preservation of peace. In a note from Prince Kaunitz, read by M. Delessart to the Assembly, in the month of February, were some very just remarks on the French Jacobins, who were truly described as a perfidious sect, the enemies of the French King, and of the fundamental principles of the existing constitution, as well as the disturbers of peace and general repose. It was not to be supposed that men, conscious of deserving these reproaches, would bear them with patience. Accordingly, the Members of the Assembly frequently interrupted the Minister with the strongest expressions of indignation and rage. One of them, Taillifer, a physician, exclaimed,—"This Emperor is a pleasant fellow,"—others proclaimed his Imperial Majesty to be a *Feuillant*; while others loudly vociferated—"What insolence!—War! War!"

On the 28th of February, the French Ministers were apprized, by the Prussian Ambassador, that the invasion of the territory of the Emperor would be considered, by his master, as an attack on the German empire, which he should feel himself bound to oppose with all his forces.—So enraged was Brissot, at the temperate language, and circumspect conduct of Delessart, during this negotiation, that he had the profligacy to denounce him to the Assembly, and to make the very letter which that Assembly had loudly applauded, the ground of his accusation.—The Minister was accordingly apprehended, and conveyed to Orleans, whence he was afterwards removed to Versailles, and murdered by the mob.*—Such was the justice, such the humanity, of this boasted friend and advocate of the Blacks!

* If any other proof than what the open declarations, and public conduct, of the jacobin faction in France, at this period, supply, of their own determination to begin the war, and of

During these transactions the Emperor, Leopold, died almost suddenly,—but his death made not the smallest change in the sentiments or conduct of the Cabinet of Vienna. The French Ambassador, however, at the Austrian Court, assured the Ministers, that the successor of Leopold had adopted no measures but such as were purely defensive, while the King of Prussia had pressed the adoption of more hostile proceedings. Yet, without the smallest regard to these representations, the Assembly resolved on immediate war; and Dumouriez, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, delivered in such a report to the King, as compelled his Majesty to go to the Assembly, on the 20th of April, and to propose a declaration of war. These legislators, who had publicly renounced all views of conquest, and who had proclaimed themselves the Heralds of Peace, and the lovers of Humanity, displayed the most indecent joy on the occasion. When M. Mailhè, a lawyer, observed, that, by the declaration of war, *they were possibly about to decree the liberty of the whole world;* they burst forth into the loudest expressions of applause. War was immediately declared against the King of Hungary and Bohemia; but not a word was said of the King of Prussia, although they knew that his disposition and his views were more hostile than those of his ally; and although he had so recently informed the French Cabinet that any attack on the territories of Austria would be considered as an attack upon his own dominions, and, as such, resisted.

Dumouriez has assured the world, that nothing could exceed the joy with which this declaration of war was received by the people

the perfectly pacific disposition of the neighbouring powers, were wanting, it would be found in the letter which the unfortunate victim of jacobinical rage, M. Delessart, wrote to his friend, Mr. Neckar, while he was in prison at Orleans. In that letter, he says, "I lament as long as I live," (alluding to the defence of himself, which he was then employed in preparing) "that it could not appear at the present moment; for it would prove curious, not on account of what particularly relates to *me*, but in consequence of the manifestation of what has passed in foreign courts, *in consequence of the demonstration that they were unwilling to make war against us;* in consequence of THE UNANSWERABLE PROOF, that it was WE who PROVOKED THEM TO HOSTILITIES, who *began them*, and *who have set Europe against us.*" .

Reflections submitted to the French nation, on the intended process against Louis XVI. by Mr. Neckar.

throughout France; and different motives have been assigned for the display of a spirit at once so aggressive and so unnatural. Brissot, and his associates, have, indeed, avowed *their* motives for wishing for war.—On the 20th of October, 1791, Brissot himself told the Legislative Assembly, "You must not only defend yourselves, *you must begin the attack;*" and, on the 29th of December, he did not hesitate, unblushingly, to declare some, at least, of his motives,—"In short, *we must have gold to pay the troops.—France must have war to re-establish her finances and her credit;*"—motives for war, which, most certainly, no public character, in a civilized country, ever before dared to avow.—It was not, however, convenient, *as yet*, to state the *grand object* which he had in view, in forcing a declaration of war.—He reserved this last avowal for the period when his plan, for the destruction of the Monarchy, should have succeeded. When this period arrived, in September, 1792, he boldly declared, "BUT FOR THE WAR, THE REVOLUTION OF THE TENTH OF AUGUST WOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN PLACE; BUT FOR THE WAR, FRANCE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN A REPUBLIC."* Hence it is proved, to demonstration, that the prevailing party in the Assembly, at the time when they solemnly swore to be faithful to the King, and to the new Constitution, were resolved to dethrone the one and to destroy the other; and were, consequently, guilty of wilful and deliberate perjury.

It is to be observed, however, that another portion of Jacobins, with Robespierre at their head (who was now public accuser to the tribunal of the metropolis), were not favourable to an immediate declaration of war, *because* they thought that it would retard, if not ultimately prevent, the destruction of the Monarchy. This notion of theirs was founded on the supposed inability of the French, in their present state, to cope with the whole force of the combined powers. But Brissot's sagacity was greater, though his prudence and decision were less, than those of his rival chief of the Jacobins.—The two men were intent on producing the same end, though they differed as to the means of promoting it. Brissot best appreciated the views and resources of foreign

* See Brissot's paper, Le Patriote Françoise, of Saturday, 22d September, 1792.

powers; Robespierre best knew how to govern the degraded people of France. They were both candidates for supreme power; and they hated each other, with most unchristian inveteracy.

Independently of the declaration of war, the French Cabinet had sufficiently shown the little regard which they paid to their formal renunciation of conquests, by their invasion of the rights and property of the German Princes in Alsace and Lorraine, which had been guaranteed and secured by solemn treaties; and by first exciting a rebellion in the papal territory of Avignon and the adjacent country; and then annexing them to the dominions of France. It was determined, likewise, even thus early, to seize upon the King of Sardinia's territories, although the most scrupulous neutrality was observed by that Monarch, and although the French Envoy, at Turin, vouched for his pacific intentions to Dumouriez, now Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The first hostilities commenced in Flanders, where a body of three thousand men, under the command of Mr. Theobald Dillon, of the Irish brigades, were destined to make an attack upon Tournay, at the end of April. The troops, however, fled, in the most pusillanimous manner, when they came in sight of the enemy, who were greatly inferior in numbers; and, returning to Lisle with that rapidity for which Frenchmen are celebrated, sought to shield their own cowardice under the pretext of treachery in their officers, and to display their courage, by the assassination of their general, whose body they committed to the flames, and then danced round it with the apish gestures, and malignant ferocity, of savages. These demons, in human shape, disgraced alike their profession and their nature, by tearing the heart out of the mangled body, and carrying it to a female relative of the murdered general, who, although she had been only delivered of a child the morning before, had been confined, for six and thirty hours, in a dark dungeon, where the dreadful alternative was offered her, of being starved to death, or of satisfying her hunger by this horrid repast.*

* I have extracted this account from Rivington's Annual Register, for 1792, p. 404, where it is related, "on the authority of a gentleman, allied by blood to the General, who went to

The troops, under M. Biron, destined to make an attempt upon the important fortress of Mons, were equally cowardly, and equally unsuccessful. Attacked by an inferior force, commanded by the Austrian General, Beaulieu, they fled in all directions, disobeyed the orders of their commander, accused, like their brethren at Lisle, their officers of treachery, and disgracefully left their camp, baggage, and military chest, a prey to the victorious enemy.

Mr. de La Fayette, who was entrusted with an expedition against Namur, harassed by contradictory orders, and unprovided with necessaries, gave up the project, and remained in a state of inactivity on the German frontier. Thus vanished the sanguine hopes of the Jacobins to overrun the Austrian low countries without difficulty, and without opposition; and to promote insurrections of their inhabitants, with a view to produce a jacobinical Revolution.—The people, every where, either remained perfectly passive, or displayed hostility to the invading armies; with the exception of a few fugitive patriots from Liege and Brabant, who took refuge with the patron of insurrection, La Fayette, and, under his auspices, formed themselves into a Belgic congress, dispersed the most indecent and libellous attacks on their Sovereigns, and, on the death of the Prince Bishop of Liege, insulted his memory with the most unfeeling brutality.

These defeats, of course, excited great clamour at Paris, where they were ascribed to every cause but the right—the cowardice, and insubordination, of the troops. A change of Ministers was the consequence; a new plan of operations was settled; and a new commander appointed. Mareschal Luckner succeeded M. de Rochambeau; and speedily subdued the open and defenceless country between Lisle and Brussels. But he was soon driven back by the Austrians, and retreated

Lisle on purpose to investigate the particulars of the transaction."—The general accuracy of the historical account of French affairs, in that work; the great diligence and industry which have been evidently displayed by the writer, in the collection of facts and documents; and the spirit of truth, which pervades the whole,—leave no doubt on my mind, as to the authenticity of this detail, although I have not met with it in any of the French publications, of this period, to which I have had occasion to refer.

hastily beyond the French frontier, after burning the suburbs of Courtray, and reducing the habitations of three hundred poor females to ashes; thus exemplifying, in an extraordinary manner, the revolutionary maxim of—war upon palaces, and protection to cottages!

Had Austria and Prussia been duly prepared for war; had they settled a plan of combined operations; had their armies been ready to enter the French territory at this period, there could be very little doubt of their success. But the new Emperor, Francis, and Frederick William, the Prussian Monarch, had been extremely averse from engaging in war, and, of course, extremely tardy in their preparations; so that they could not follow up the first advantages which the Austrian arms had obtained in the Low Countries. A great deal of time, now highly precious, was wasted in drawing up and publishing declarations, by both powers. In these, both the Emperor and the King of Prussia entered into a clear and forcible exposition of their motives, fully justified themselves from the charge of aggression, and proved, most satisfactorily, by arguments and facts, that the war had entirely been provoked by the unjustifiable and hostile proceedings of the French Jacobins.

During these preparatory measures, the Anarchists of Paris were hastening, with rapidity, to the final accomplishment of their work.—The Press, that powerful instrument, infinitely more destructive than the sword, was employed, systematically and incessantly, for rendering both the Monarch and the Monarchy odious. And, in order to blunt its edge at least, if not to turn it against the enemies of the throne, it was deemed expedient, by the Ministers, to bribe some of its principal conductors. M. de Narbonne, one of the Cabinet, who was half a Constitutionalist, and half a Jacobin, or rather a man without any principle, but insufferably vain and egotistical, undertook to negotiate for the silence of Brissot and Condorçet. But while this matter was under consideration, the former of these incendiaries published, in his paper, a most atrocious libel upon the King. M. Bertrand de Moleville, then Minister of the Marine, pressed, in the council, the neces-

sity of prosecuting the author. But his motion was overruled by the imbecility of M. de Narbonne, and his associates, who, even at this period, were either weak or wicked enough to think, or at least to say, that such libels were worthy only of being treated with silent contempt. If men were really so weak as to entertain this belief, after the fatal effects which they had seen produced by the licentiousness of the Press, and the impunity which it was allowed to enjoy, within the two preceding years, they were wholly unfit to be trusted with the reins of government. If, on the other hand, they did not believe their own assertions, their wickedness was equal to that of the Jacobins, whose cause, whether intentionally or not, they effectually served. Soon after this, M. Bertrand resigned; M. de Narbonne was dismissed; and a new ministry of Brissotins was appointed, who were speedily succeeded by others.

Anarchy, meanwhile, the natural offspring of Jacobinism, began to extend her gloomy reign over the fertile provinces of this devoted country. The non-juring priests were not only the objects of persecution themselves, but the cause of the persecution of others. Emigrations, for conscience sake, became frequent; children were forcibly taken from their parents to be baptized by a constitutional priest. Even the tomb afforded no refuge from the persecuting spirit of these Jacobinical fanatics, who dug up the cold remains of the dead to inter them afresh in unconsecrated ground, because, when living, they had heard mass from a non-juring priest.—The Abbè Barruel, however, has recorded some instances of brutal outrage, and savage ferocity, exercised on the living, still more atrocious. In the diocese of Agen, the sister of the parish-priest of St. Cecile, was beaten and ravished by a set of ruffians, who, in vain, attempted to make her violate her conscience, by repairing to a church at which a constitutional priest officiated; and she actually expired under the treatment which she experienced!* At Villeneuve, near Cordes, in Albigeois, a young couple having refused to be married by a priest of the same description, their door was forced open on the evening of the wedding; the

* History of the Clergy, during the French Revolution; by the Abbè Barruel. Vol. II. p. 43.

husband made his escape; but the bride was subjected to the brutal lust of the ruffians, who, after they had satisfied their appetite, tore off the breasts of their wretched victim with their nails, and left her to expire in torments.—These are taken from among numerous instances of similar enormity; accompanied, however, by instances as striking of constancy and fidelity, on the part of those who adhered to the faith of their fathers, and who refused to obey the decrees of the Jacobins in violation of their own conscience.

About this time, Dumouriez obtained from the Assembly 250,000*l.* sterling, for secret services. Petion, the *virtuous* mayor of Paris, and the *sage* Roland, desired to have twelve hundred and fifty pounds a month allowed them, which they said should be employed to secure the public tranquillity. Dumouriez mentioned their request to the King, who told him, that he knew Petion to be his enemy, and that, if the money were given him, it would be appropriated to the purpose of distributing libels on the throne; but that if he (Dumouriez) thought it advisable to give it, he was at liberty to do so. The money was given, and the effect, predicted by the King, was immediately produced, by the establishment of a new paper, the *Sentinel*, conducted by *Louvet*, and by a woman who lived with him in a state of adultery, and whom he termed *Lodoiska;* in which the King was incessantly, and most grossly, libelled.

All this was intended to pave the way for the scenes which had been long projected, and for the performance of which the Jacobins now evinced extreme impatience. On the 15th of May, the perfumer, Isnard, who has been before noticed, proposed a most seditious remonstrance to the King, whom he had the audacity directly to accuse of having signed an order for massacring the inhabitants of Paris in 1789; asserting, that the people had replaced him on the throne, when any other people would have deposed him, and when the English would have tried and condemned him for perjury; and impudently insinuating, that the Austrian generals had been informed of the plans of the French by his Majesty.

It is to be presumed that all the knowledge which this perfumer possessed of England, her history, and the disposition of her inhabitants, had been collected from the Jacobin prints, or from the seditious addresses, which the factious clubs in this country had transmitted to the National and Legislative Assemblies.—It is certain, however, that, in no other public body, in the civilized world, would such a series of atrocious falsehoods, as this man had the presumption to utter in the speech in question, and in other speeches, delivered before the same Assembly, have been suffered to pass without contradiction, or the speaker himself to escape without punishment.—He, though one of the many who had sworn obedience to the constitution, launched into a strain of violent invective against it. He condemned the first Assembly for having established an order of things, which had left the will of one man exalted to a level with the will of all; which had trusted the protection of liberty to the very hands which had kept the nation enslaved; and had put into them the two weapons most fatal to freedom,—*the sword that assassinates, and the gold that poisons.*—Here Mr. Isnard's zeal outstripped his judgment; and, like many of his worthy predecessors, he accused the King of the very crimes which had been committed by the Jacobins themselves, and which, if the King had had recourse to them for self-preservation, would have completely marred all the efforts of the revolutionists, and have deprived Mr. Isnard himself of the opportunity of displaying his oratorical talents, beyond the precincts of his own shop. It was, indeed, the *sword of the assassin* that wrested the King from the palace of his ancestors,—that levelled with the dust the residences of the nobles, and multitudes of the nobility themselves,—that left the venerable ministers of religion, and their faithful followers, weltering in their blood, the expiring victims of conscience, or else drove them from their paternal homes, to linger out a miserable existence in a foreign land!—It was the *sword of the assassin*, in short, that, drenched in the blood of virtue, of integrity, of innocence, of royalty, and religion, converted France into a vast *aceldama;* destroyed every vestige of freedom; made her the undivided seat of treason and of vice; and rendered her, at once, the dread, the abhorrence, and the scourge of surrounding nations. Had the unhappy, the

feeble, the irresolute Louis, only wielded, not the *sword of the assassin*, but the *sword of justice*, the loud voice of rebellion had been soon silenced, and the turbulent traitors of Paris had long since met the due reward of their nameless and numberless crimes. It was, indeed, the *gold* which poisons the mind, and corrupts the heart of man, that had set that sword in motion by which freedom was destroyed; and that, at the very time when Isnard spoke, was employed by the traitors Petion, Roland, and their sanguinary associates, in preparing further scenes of blood, and in securing the further triumph of treason and murder.—But it was blood for which Isnard thirsted, and his thirst of which he did not blush to acknowledge to the Assembly!

After indulging himself in the most virulent abuse of the King, the priests, the nobles, and the rich, his hatred of whom might be, very naturally, accounted for, he proceeded to contrast the objects of his attack with those of his admiration and praise; with those whose cold reason, and inexorable policy, he said, were deaf to the promises of prostrate tyrants, and insensible to the call of self-interest, because they knew that the freedom of a day always cost too much, but that durable freedom could not be too dearly purchased; and that *slight bleedings were not perceived in the body politic; that they were nothing when the public safety was at stake!* This strain of horrible declamation the cold-blooded assassin was allowed to pursue, for a considerable length of time, without interruption. He concluded with moving his remonstrance, "as a serious and definitive explanation with the King; the *ultimatum* of the sovereign will of the people, which should thoroughly impress the latter with a sense of their own dignity, and the former with a conviction of his nullity." But the Assembly were not yet ripe for the open avowal of such designs, and, notwithstanding the indecent plaudits and acclamations of the mob in the gallery, they passed to the order of the day.

The public mind having been prepared by this discussion, and by various others, for the destruction of Royalty, the Brissotins deemed it necessary, as a preliminary measure, to remove the King's guard, who were supposed to be attached to him, and who were commanded

by the Duke de Brissac, from about his person. The resolution being adopted, a pretext was easily found for submitting the plan to the Assembly. These guards were described as being infected with counter-revolutionary principles, and as having concealed a white flag, in a cellar, for the purpose of being displayed on some future occasion. On a charge thus vague and ridiculous did these *enemies of despotism* dare to order the Duke de Brissac to be arrested.—And that virtuous nobleman was accordingly apprehended, and conducted to the prison at Orleans, whence he was afterwards conveyed to Marseilles, and there murdered.—At the same time, and on the same pretext, the Assembly passed a decree for disbanding the guards.*

The King, who was fully aware of the consequence of giving his assent to this decree, announced to his Ministers his intention of refusing it. But the traitors, by whom he was surrounded, not only refused to countersign his letter to the Assembly, but even to attend him, when he proposed to repair thither, for the purpose of explaining the motives of his refusal. They were even base enough to tell him, that his refusal would be followed by the immediate massacre of his guards, and of every individual in the palace †.—And, by this infamous conduct, they induced the unhappy and forsaken Monarch to give, as it were, his sanction to his own deposition.

Having, by these nefarious means, disbanded the only troops on whose fidelity the Monarch could place the smallest reliance, the next step of the Jacobins was to collect an army, composed of men, long trained to blood, and prepared to execute their worst commands. The *sic volo, sic jubeo* of this Assembly, who had usurped the supreme power of the State, was amply sufficient for this, as for every other, purpose. A *decree* was passed, at the beginning of June, for forming a camp of 20,000 Jacobin volunteers, from every part of the kingdom, being composed of five men from each canton, under the very walls of the capital, on the pretence of celebrating the anniversary of the federation. The measure was, indeed, proposed by a creature of Brissot's,

* Bertrand's Private Memoirs. Vol. II. p. 252. † Idem. Ibid. p. 254.

whom the King had been compelled to admit into the Cabinet; but Mr. Servan (the Minister in question) did not even think it necessary to preserve the appearance of decency so far as to obtain an order from his captive master, or to communicate his intentions to his colleagues. The plan had, nevertheless, been previously settled, discussed, and determined, at the Jacobin club.—"This measure," says a French historian, "was dreadful from its consequences. The influence of the affiliated clubs, fixed the men who were to be chosen in every canton, and, when united, they composed an armed force, at the devotion of those whose projects now began to be developed."*

About the same time, the Assembly passed another decree, for the banishment of all the non-juring priests. These decrees the King resolved not to sanction; and Dumouriez, with two other members of the Cabinet, Lacoste and Duranthon, seconded his resolution, and encouraged him to dismiss Roland, Claviere, and Servan, from his councils. This was accordingly done; but such were the weakness and inconsistency of Dumouriez, that, after these men were dismissed, he did not blush to urge the King to give his sanction to those very decrees which had been the ground of their dismission, and to declare that, if his Majesty would not sanction them, he must resign his situation. The King remonstrated against this indecent proposal, but in vain; Dumouriez, afraid of losing his popularity, and, perhaps, of falling a victim to the Jacobins, persisted, and his resignation was accepted.

The disposition of the national guards of Paris, at this time, was favourable to the King, and to the existing constitution; but the superior vigilance, zeal, activity, and resolution, of the united Jacobins, under Brissot and Robespierre, overpowered their feeble opposition, and bore down all before them. The long-projected insurrection of the 20th of June took place.—On the morning of that day the Assembly were early apprized that the populace were in arms; and, soon after, the ruffians of the suburb of St. Anthony, with the brewer, Santerre, at their head, marched through the hall in which these legis-

* Histoire de France depuis la Revolution de 1789, par le Citoyen F. E. Toulongeon. Tome II. p. 141.

lators were sitting.—The banners of assassination floated in their ranks; "*Tremble, tyrant, thy hour is come,*" was the murderous threat displayed on one of their scrolls; and a reeking heart, stuck on a pike, inscribed "*The heart of an aristocrat,*" afforded a convincing proof of the disposition to carry such a threat into execution. These assassins were received (will civilized Europe credit the fact?) by the Assembly with applause, and the President even degraded himself so low as to compliment their sanguinary orator.

From the Assembly they proceeded to the palace, into the gardens of which they dragged their cannon, threatening to fire in case of resistance. These ferocious banditti attacked the residence of their benevolent Sovereign, and broke open the doors of its various apartments, with hatchets and other instruments.—The King then came forward, accompanied by the Princess Elizabeth, who was mistaken by the rabble for the Queen; a mistake which, from the most humane motives, that virtuous lady encouraged. A fellow, armed with the blade of a sword, fastened to the end of a stick, no sooner saw the King than he put himself in a posture of attack, and would, probably, have completed the bloody work which he was hired to perpetrate, if he had not been prevented by the bayonets of the grenadiers. Indeed, there could be no doubt, from the threats and gestures of many of the mob, that it was intended to murder both the King and the Queen. Legendre, the butcher, addressed, in a tone of insolence and insult, the unhappy Monarch, who, for several hours was destined to hear the language of reproach, as cowardly in those who uttered it, as unmerited by him to whom it was addressed. The Assembly made no effort to afford relief to the King, or to induce the mob to depart; they sent, indeed, a deputation to the palace, when it was too late to produce any good effect; and it was treated by the rabble with the contempt which it deserved, and which it probably hoped to experience.—At length, however, M. Petion, the factious mayor, appeared, and, by flattering the people, whose magistrate he called himself, and by commending that conduct which it was his duty to repress and to punish, he secured the only applause of which he was worthy, and incurred the only benediction he could hope to obtain. The populace retired with him.

The day after this disgraceful scene, Mr. Bertrand de Moleville had an interesting conversation with the King, who expressed his conviction that it was resolved to murder him,—that, sooner or later, such would be his fate,—and that his only wish, if such an event were to take place, was, that it might be the act of individuals, and not of the nation.* His Majesty, however, rejected the plan which Mr. Bertrand proposed for leaving the capital and retiring to Fontainbleau.

All the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly now clearly demonstrated the views by which the majority of them were actuated. The most violent motions were daily made, especially by the Brissotins, and the most unconstitutional decrees were passed; while fresh injuries, and fresh insults, were incessantly heaped upon the devoted head of the hapless King. Yet in the midst of these palpable breaches of duty, of these flagrant violations of the constitution, a scene occurred, unparalleled in the annals of human inconsistency. On the 7th of July, M. Lamourette, the new bishop of Lyons, truly observed, that the cause of the evil which afflicted the state, was to be found in the disastrous divisions of the Assembly.—One side charged the other with the seditious design of overthrowing the monarchy, while the latter accused their opponents of wishing to introduce an arbitrary government. "Let us, then," said he, amidst a general tumult of applause, "with one unanimous and *irrevocable* oath, let us blast for ever the project both of a republic and of two chambers. I move that the president shall put the question for all to stand up who abjure and execrate alike, a republic and two chambers." Strange to say, every member of the Assembly rose at the same instant, and solemnly swore to suffer no change whatever to be made in the existing constitution![†] Yet, after an interval of two days only, did Brissot, the factious hypocrite, the

* Bertrand's Private Memoirs, Vol. II. p. 297, 298.

† At the close of this singular scene, a deputation of twenty-four members was dispatched to the King to inform him of the event. His Majesty immediately repaired to the Assembly, to which he expressed his extreme satisfaction, and by which he was received with the loudest applause. The galleries even joined in their expressions of joy on the occasion, and the president made a suitable answer to the King, who retired amidst acclamations, to which, of late, he had been little accustomed, and which, alas! he was never more destined to experience.

perjured rebel, Brissot, deliver a laboured harangue on the state of the nation, replete with the most unconstitutional principles, and with the most treasonable sentiments. He did not blush to arraign the Assembly for their recent act, to hold up the King as a *criminal*, and, in pretty direct terms, to call for his deposition! Such was the respect which this philanthropic reformer of the French monarchy paid to the solemn obligation of an oath!

On the evening of the 14th of July, an attempt was made to assassinate the Queen, by a grenadier of the battalion of national guards, which was commanded by Santerre, the brewer, at whose instigation he undertook to commit this deed of blood.—Fortunately, the project was timely discovered, and the murderer was, in consequence, apprehended in the palace, when a cutlass was found concealed in the lining of his coat;* but he was rescued the next morning as he was about to be taken before a magistrate.

The ceremony of the federation was now renewed, and the *federates*, who had come to Paris to attend it, still loitered in the capital, and made no secret of their intentions not to depart until they had expelled the King from the throne.† These were the chosen instruments of murder whom the Jacobins had trained to their purpose; and the Assembly not merely connived at, but encouraged, the acts of outrage which they daily committed. The 29th of July was the day first fixed on for the intended insurrection, when the palace was to be again attacked, and the persons of the King and Queen seized, and confined in the Castle of Vincennes. Petion, the mayor, was privy to the whole scheme, and knowing, from his correspondence, that every thing was not prepared for the projected attack, he derived some credit with the court, who knew not his motives, for his successful efforts to stop the progress of some of the rebellious hordes, who, ignorant of the subsisting impediments, had put themselves in motion on the appointed morning.

* Bertrand's Private Memoirs, Vol. II. p. 344, 345.

† Compte rendu de Jerome Petion.

On the third of August, Petion presented a petition to the Assembly, from the different sections of Paris, calmly demanding the deposition of the King. But, after some delay, it was referred to the consideration of a committee, whose report was not received before the fatal tenth of August.—The events of that day, rendered for ever infamous in the sanguinary annals of revolutionary France, are well known. The project of the regicides, brought to maturity, was carried into effect; the Royal Palace was stormed, its faithful defenders were butchered, the King and Queen were made captives, and treason and murder reigned triumphant and uncontrolled. The Legislative Assembly, to which the Sovereigns of France fled for refuge and protection, were active supporters of the Rebellion, assisted in delivering the innocent to be murdered by the mob, suspended the functions of royalty, vested the supreme power in an executive council, and consigned the King and Queen to the custody of the municipality, by whom they were committed to the Prison of the Temple;—thus completely subverting the whole of that constitution which they had, so recently, sworn to support.

The interval which occurred between this event, and the final dissolution of the Legislative Assembly, was marked by more crimes than had ever before been crowded into the same period of time. While the Brissotins began to tremble for the consequences of their own enormities, the other Jacobins felt their power, and resolved to exercise it. False charges, supported by false testimony, were preferred against all who were attached to the King and the Monarchy, and judicial murders, daily committed, spread terror through the capital.—But even the red arm of the law moved not with sufficient rapidity to satisfy the impatient vengeance of the triumphant Jacobins. Threats, in the form of petitions, were made to break open the prisons, and to glut their insatiate souls with blood. Even cold-blooded philosophers, and female casuists, were not wanting, to praise and to justify this atrocious plan. Mr. Petion, the worthy head of the Parisian municipality, observed, that "justice was slow to pronounce on the fate of the prisoners;" and a flippant writer of our own country, who had repaired to France to contemplate the charms, and the virtues, of

political regeneration, coolly remarked, that "the tribunals, overloaded with business, and *hampered by the common forms of justice, too slow for a period of revolution*, made almost no perceptible progress in bringing the *guilty* to condemnation."* In pursuance of the murderous principles, naturally flowing from this new morality, the ruffians proceeded to execute summary justice on the second of September; when, and on the following day, the prisons were forced open; an indiscriminate massacre of their wretched inhabitants took place,—priests, venerable from their age, and still more from their virtues, were inhumanly butchered in crowds,—and the blood of innocence flowed in torrents around. The whole number murdered, on this occasion, as well in the various prisons, as in the streets of the capital, did not fall short of seven thousand persons. Many of these murders were attended with circumstances of peculiar cruelty. The Abbè Barruel, in his history of the sufferings of the French clergy,† asserts, on authority which he deems indisputable, that, at the Place Dauphine, men, women, and children, were thrown into a large fire, which had been kindled for the purpose, and their bodies consumed to ashes, while the cries of the suffering victims were deadened by the shouts of the barbarians dancing round the flames.

Nor was this systematic massacre confined to the capital. The dogs of slaughter were let loose in the provinces.—At Versailles, at Rheims, at Lyons, and at Meaux, numbers fell by various instruments of destruction.—At the first of those places, the state prisoners, who had been forcibly conveyed thither from Orleans, in direct contradiction to an order of the Legislative Assembly, were murdered by a body of *thirty* assassins, in the presence of *fifteen hundred* soldiers, who had been sent to protect them. Here fell M. Delessart, the Duke de Brissac, M. D'Abancour, the Bishop of Mendes, and several other persons of distinction.

During the prevalence of this bloody fanaticism, a monster in human shape, whose name was Philippe, went, one evening, to the jacobin

* Miss Williams's Letters from France, Vol. IV. p. 192.

† Part III. p. 150.

club, with a trunk, which, after a suitable harangue on the duties of a patriot, he opened, and, exhibiting two bleeding heads, observed, they were the heads of his own parents, whom he had murdered for attending mass celebrated by a non-juring priest. The horrible intelligence was received with applause by his admiring audience!!!

While the advocates of rebellion had thus successfully asserted their claims, and triumphed over the friends of their King and of their country, the allied powers of Austria and Prussia had, after much deliberation, and many changes in their projected plan of operations, marched their armies into the French territory. Their united force, which has been estimated variously, by the writers of the different countries, from eighty to one hundred and thirty-eight thousand men,* entered France, in two columns, under the command of the Duke of Brunswick and General Clerfait; intending to pass through the forest of Argonne into Champagne, as the nearest road to Paris. It would be foreign from the purpose of this history to enter into a detail of military operations in which the troops of Great Britain took no part. It will be sufficient, therefore, to observe, that after the most unaccountable neglect to secure the passes of the forest, which might easily have been done without difficulty and without loss, the allies allowed Dumouriez, who now commanded the French, with an army little exceeding one-fourth of their own numbers, to seize two of the most important, and, by so doing, to arrest their progress, and to gain time for reinforcements from different quarters to join him. The delay, too, thus occasioned, produced other inconveniences; it afforded an opportunity for small detachments of the French, scattered on the rear of the allies, to intercept their convoys. Hence a want of provision was experienced in their camp, while the soldiers, partly perhaps from hunger, devoured, with avidity, the various fruits which the country presented; which produced that dreadful disorder, the flux, by which thousands are said to have perished in a short time.

* Citizen Toulongeon is the only historian who has made the allied armies amount to so large a number. But not one of the French writers is to be credited, in his details of actions, between his own countrymen and the troops of any foreign power. On comparing the various accounts, it seems most probable that the allied armies did not fall short of 75,000 men, and did not exceed 85,000.

It is to be observed, that the King of Prussia constantly accompanied his own army, which, in fact, he may be said to have commanded; for no operation of importance was undertaken without his previous approbation; and in some cases, on which the ultimate success of the expedition essentially depended, he opposed the plans suggested by the Duke of Brunswick. The Duke wished to reduce the town of Sedan, before they advanced further, and not to move forward without having secured themselves against the danger resulting from leaving behind them several strong fortresses in possession of the enemy. Had this wise plan been followed, a communication would have been preserved with Germany, and supplies easily received.—And, had the reduction of these places occupied any considerable portion of time, an event not to be expected in their actual situation, the allies might have then established their winter quarters in France, and maintained a rallying point, to which the enemies of the new order of things might have repaired. But the Prussian Monarch seems to have been led, perhaps, by the too sanguine expectations of the Emigrants, to entertain the monstrous notion of carrying a whole nation by a coup-de-main. It does not appear to have occurred to him, that it was necessary first to gain a decisive victory, to disperse the French army, and to assert his own superiority in a manner so signal as to admit of no doubt, before the Royalists, who still remained in France, could be expected to join his standard, or even to avow themselves.—And, being disappointed in hopes which common sense would have rejected, regardless alike of his own honour, of the interests of his allies, and of the safety of Europe, he resolved to retrace his steps, and to avail himself of the first favourable opportunity, for not only evacuating the French territory, but for basely deserting the cause which he had so eagerly embraced.

On any other supposition it is impossible to account for the conduct of his Prussian Majesty. Agreeably to these intentions, on the twenty-second of September, after having compelled Dumouriez to evacuate the important pass of Grandpré, and after having driven Kellermann from the heights of Valmy, the Duke of Brunswick was ordered to propose a suspension of hostilities, in front of the respective camps,

with a view to open a communication, for the purpose of carrying the King's intentions into effect. The *pretext* for this proposed suspension, was the establishment of a cartel, for the exchange of prisoners, which, in fact, was settled; but in a manner that reflected indelible disgrace on the King of Prussia. At the conference which took place, on this occasion, between the Duke of Brunswick and the French Colonel, Thouvenot, the former required that the emigrant prisoners should be included in the cartel, when the latter observed, "that one nation could only treat with another, and not *with rebels* to the laws of their country." The Duke is then stated to have asked, what would become of their prisoners? to which Thouvenot answered, that they must doubtless expect to be subjected to all the severity of the laws, and "possibly, according to circumstances, they might expect to receive the indulgence and generosity of such a magnanimous nation as the French republic." The Duke of Brunswick insisted no farther, and the cartel was settled, to the exclusion of the emigrants.* Passing over the republican flight of Mr. Thouvenot, who must have known that he and his associates were the only rebels to the laws, since they had concurred in the overthrow of the monarchial constitution, which they had sworn to maintain, it cannot escape observation, that the King of Prussia's conduct, in thus abandoning the emigrants, with whom he had made common cause, was most treacherous and base. In the several conferences which took place, between the Republican and the Prussian generals, as detailed and certified by the former, the latter are made to play a ridiculous and contemptible part. Without, however, stopping to examine the authenticity of these accounts, it is sufficient to state, that the negotiations were continued for several days. And, though hostilities were partially renewed on the 30th of September, there is

* *Resultat de la conférence qui a eu lieu entre M. M. le Duc de Brunswick, le Comte de Luchesini, ministre de sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, et le lieutenant-colonel—Adjutant-general Thouvenot, chargé de l'échange des Prisonniers de guerre entre les armées combinées et françaises.* It is to be observed, that Luchesini was not present at the beginning of this conference, when the proposal respecting the emigrants is stated to have been made; and that, the account of it being given on the authority of Thouvenot, it ought, perhaps, to be received with some degree of caution. It is an incontestible fact, however, that the emigrants were not included in the cartel, and that they were, most ungenerously, left to the rage of their merciless persecutors.

reason to believe that a good understanding had been established between the hostile leaders.—Certain it is, that the allies were suffered to retreat without molestation; the places which they had taken were surrendered without difficulty; and, by the end of October, they finally evacuated the French territory.

The accounts of the respective numbers of the hostile armies, at the period of this retreat, vary extremely.—Toulongeon, who has recently written a history of France, since the Revolution, estimates the allied force, after all its losses, at 80,000 men; and, as he makes it amount, on its entrance into France, to 138,000, he raises their loss to 58,000. On the other hand, its original amount is stated at 80,000, and its loss, by the sword and by disease, at about one-third of the whole, which would reduce it, at the time of its retrogade movement, to about 54,000. Again, the same historian rates the French army, at this last period, at 60,000 men; whereas Carra, one of the commissioners from the convention to the army, makes it amount to 120,000.

The truth lies probably between the two extremes; but it appears sufficiently clear, amidst these contradictions, that the force of the allies was, at first s ufficiently formidable to accomplish its original object of marching to Paris, had it been directed with prudence and skill, and had not its operations been clogged by the wavering and timid policy of the Prussian Monarch. It is equally clear, on the other hand, that, at the end of September, its numbers had been sufficiently diminished, and those of the French sufficiently increased, to render any attempt to penetrate further into France extremely imprudent, and to expose the allied army, in its retreat, to considerable danger. It is hence to be inferred, and, indeed, the operations of the French, during the month of October, sufficiently prove the fact, that it formed part of a secret arrangement between the Prussians and French, that the former should not be molested in their retreat. Thus miserably terminated an expedition, which had excited the attention, and fixed the hopes, of the continent, and on which, in a certain degree, the fate of Europe depended.—Its issue tended to increase the audacity, and to inspirit the exertions of the French rebels, who had

already planned the subjugation of the neighbouring States, and the establishment of an universal empire. It was begun without due reflection; it was conducted without consistency; and it was ended without honour. The King of Prussia, while he injured the cause which he professed an anxiety to serve by it, lost in it his consequence and his character; and laid the seeds of that destruction which, fourteen years after, his Monarchy was doomed to experience.

At an interview, which took place at the village of Glorieux, in the vicinity of Verdun, on the 11th of October, between the Prussian General, Kalkreuth, and the French Generals, Galbaud and Arthur Dillon; the last, who was an Irishman, and who made his religion a pretext for entering into the service of the natural enemies of his country, told the Prussians, that the French Revolution had been brought about by the experience of fourteen centuries; that the whole nation had but one opinion respecting it; that they had reason to wonder, that foreign powers should interpose in their domestic concerns, or should dread their ambition, particularly after their sublime declaration of beginning no war with a view to conquest;—a declaration which ought, he asserted, to procure to France as many friends as there were philosophers in Europe.*

The falsehood of this assertion was known to the French General, at the moment when he made it. He knew perfectly, that the war against Austria was made expressly with a view to the conquest of the Netherlands;—that Avignon, and the Comtat, had been wrested from the Pope and annexed to France; and that the reduction of Savoy was undertaken from a similar motive. In short, the conduct of the French rulers was essentially aggressive;—and the plan was already laid, as Brissot has acknowledged, by these philanthropic professors of peace, to extend the flames of war, so as to set fire to the four corners of Europe.

* Histoire de France, par Toulongeon.—Piéces justificatives. Tom. II. p. 152.

CHAPTER XX.

Reflections on the effects which recent occurrences in France ought to have produced on the early admirers of the French Revolution in England—Effects which they *really* produced—Addresses from English clubs to the French Convention—Factious Address from a Society at Newington—Address from the Revolution Society, signed by Dr. Towers, congratulating the French on the deposition of their Monarch, and on the successful exercise of "*The Right of Insurrection*"—United Address from Societies at Manchester, Norwich, and London, imprecating the destruction of Monarchy through the world—Address of the Constitutional Society, anticipating a national convention in England, accompanied by a present of shoes to the military rebels of France—The President's answer to the address, announcing the near approach of a republic in England—Great confidence of the disaffected in the autumn of 1792—Critical state of the country—Mr. Reeves—His arrival in England—Origin of the Loyal Associations—Their rapid extension, and salutary effects—Their end and object explained—Wholly unconnected with government—Mr. Pitt doubts their policy, and intimates a wish for their suppression—The founders of the associations refuse to comply with his wish—Mr. Pitt changes his opinion, and expresses his approbation of the first committee appointed—Expences of the associations wholly defrayed by the voluntary contributions of the Members—List of the Committee—Mr. Thomas Law—He is expelled from the Committee—Motives of that expulsion—Striking change in the internal appearance of the country—General burst of loyalty—Mr. Pitt appointed Warden of the Cinque Ports—Parliament meet—The King's Speech—Debates on the Address—Loyal Associations abused by the Opposition, who condemn a doctrine which they do not understand—Their censure of a printed paper, by the Reverend William Jones, of Nayland—That paper defended—Mr. Fox again avows his admiration of the French Revolution—Motion for the amendment lost by a majority of two hundred and forty—New motion, by Mr. Fox, for opening a negotiation with the French republic—His praise of the French troops, and his abuse of the allied powers—Seconded by Mr. Sheridan—Opposed by Mr. Burke—Motion negatived without a division—Unanimity of Parliament, in condemning the trial and approaching murder of the French King—Alien bill introduced by Mr. Pitt—Reflections upon it—Opposed by Mr. Fox—Mr. Fox's inconsistency exposed by Mr. Burke—Atheism the first fruits of French liberty—Daggers manufactured at Birmingham—One of these produced, by Mr. Burke, in the House of Commons—Kersaint's testimony to the neutrality of the English—Murder of Louis XVI.—Dismissal of Chauvelin—Royal message—Debate on it—Mr. Pitt's speech—His horror at the recent murder of the virtuous Louis—Advantages to be derived from that event, considered as a lesson, illustrative of French principles—Eulogy on the British constitution—Memorable

decrees of the French Convention, for encouraging insurrection in foreign States—Strict neutrality of England, and the aggressive conduct of France demonstrated—Address of thanks to his Majesty, moved by Mr. Pitt—Observations on Mr. Pitt's conduct at this time—Speech of Mr. Fox—He asserts *the Sovereignty of the People, as paramount to all laws*, and their *right to cashier Kings for misconduct*—The tendency of such declarations—Constant and earnest endeavours of Mr. Pitt to prevent a war, proved by the French agents themselves—Conference proposed by Dumouriez, with Lord Auckland and M. Von Spieghel—Communications on that subject—Lord Auckland receives instructions to hold the conference—Place appointed for the purpose—The French Convention send orders to Dumouriez not to hold it.

[1792.] It was natural to suppose, that those scenes which had occurred in France, during the year 1792, and of which a faint sketch has been given in the preceding chapter, were such as would excite the indignation and abhorrence of every mind which had a respect for the principles of humanity, justice, and social order; that they would even be sufficient to produce a radical change of opinion in those who had, from the love of liberty, and from the hatred of despotism, hailed the first dawn of the French Revolution, as the signal of approaching happiness to the civilized world. This supposition was natural, because the most superficial observer, who had paid any attention to those occurrences, could not fail to perceive that, instead of favouring the cause of freedom, they were calculated to destroy every vestige of liberty, and to raise up, on the ruins of a monarchy, a turbulent anarchy, incompatible with social happiness, and the most odious despotism which had ever bent the necks of a people beneath its iron yoke. Liberty never erects her throne in a land whence Justice has been banished; Law is her parent and protector; Riot and Mis-rule are her enemies; Treason and Murder are her destroyers.

These considerations, however, did not produce their natural effect on the minds of those discontented Englishmen, who, having early adopted French principles, were eager to reduce them to practice in their native land. It was not difficult to persuade those who preferred idleness to industry, and those whom nature had destined to pursue the more humble paths of life, or those who aspire to wealth and power, without the merit or the means of obtaining either, that a revolution, which would destroy all distinctions of rank and property, and which

would place them upon a level with those who had hitherto filled the upper parts in the social pyramid, was

"A consummation devoutly to be wished."

Nor was it more difficult to make them believe that, as complete success had crowned the efforts of the French revolutionists, their own exertions would terminate in the full gratification of all their wishes. Stimulated by these motives, and fired by these hopes, the seditious clubs acquired fresh activity and strength; and new clubs, all connected with each other, or, to use the new jargon of revolutionary France, *affiliated*, sprang up in every quarter of the kingdom. *Reform* was the *pretext* of all; *revolution* the *object* of most. The members made common cause with the French Jacobins, whom they considered as their great models and masters; they deplored their defeats with tears,—they hailed their successes with exultation. After the rebellious attack upon the royal palace, on the 10th of August, and the arbitrary imprisonment of the Royal Family, not only without the sanction of any law, but in express violation of an existing law, and even of a fundamental principle of that constitution which they, and their friends in England, affected to admire, the National Convention continued to receive addresses of congratulation from this country.

In these addresses, a society at *Newington* took the lead; but their address, though signed on the 21st of October, was not presented till the 10th of November. After congratulating the Convention on the expulsion of the allied armies from their territory, they told them, that *their wise decrees had enlightened Europe,—and, like the rays of the sun, would soon enlighten the four parts of the world*; and, as if they feared that this metaphorical language would not be sufficiently intelligible to the philosophic legislators of France, they concluded with a more direct invitation, by complimenting the Convention on *their undertaking to deliver from slavery and despotism the brave nations which bordered their frontiers.*—"*How holy,*" said they, in a burst of rebellious sensibility, "*is the humanity which prompts you to break their chains!*"

The address of the Revolution Society is remarkable as being signed by Dr. Towers, and as containing an express congratulation on the success of the treasonable insurrection of the 10th of August, which put an end to the monarchy, and as observing a profound silence on the massacres of September, as if they were not worthy of a thought. Indeed, many of the very members of the Convention, whom they hailed as the patrons of liberty, were the authors and instigators of those horrible butcheries, which future ages will scarcely credit.—"ABOVE ALL," said these solemn and deliberate encouragers of rebellion and regicide, "we rejoice in the late Revolution of the 10th of *August*, so *necessary* to *secure* to you the advantages which the former had taught you to expect; and we anticipate with pleasure the moment at which you shall have finished your labours, and established a wise and equitable government, which *must be* the admiration of the friends of man, and the cause of terror and despair to tyrants." These gentlemen, too, could not refrain from expressing the pleasure which they felt on "beholding that THE RIGHT OF INSURRECTION had been successfully exercised in so large a country as that of the French Republic."

On the 7th of November, a joint address, from four different societies, two at Manchester, one at Norwich, and another in London, and signed by Mr. Maurice Margarot, and by Thomas Hardy, the shoemaker, was read in the Convention. Its language was bold and plain; and the men who drew it up took little pains to conceal their wishes, their views, or their object. They represented themselves as an *oppressed part of mankind*, whose cause was intimately connected with that of the French Jacobins, degraded by an oppressive system of inquisition, the insensible, but continual encroachments of which had quietly deprived the English nation of its boasted liberty, and reduced it almost to that abject state of slavery from which the French had *so gloriously* emancipated themselves.—*Five thousand English citizens*, they said, fired with indignation, had the courage to step forward in order to rescue their country from that opprobrium which had been thrown upon it by the base conduct of those who were invested with power. They then imprecated vengeance on the head of the man

who should attempt to dissolve the friendship which subsisted between themselves and the French Jacobins. They observed, that their number would appear very small, when compared with the rest of the nation; but they asserted, that it increased every day; and that, in spite of the efforts of authority to overcome the timid, knowledge made a rapid progress among Englishmen, who were intent on ascertaining the nature of liberty, and the extent of their rights. "*Frenchmen,*" said they, "*you are already free, but Britons are preparing to be so!*"—As Frenchmen had obtained the species of *freedom* which they now enjoyed, by the destruction of their King, their nobles, and their priests, it was evidently meant, by these reformers, that Britons were preparing to secure the same freedom, by the same means;—and a more explicit avowal of their intentions scarcely any words could convey.—Indeed, they observed that in the endeavour to discover their cruel enemies, they had found them in the partisans of that destructive aristocracy by which their bosom was torn—an aristocracy which had hitherto been the bane of all the countries upon earth; and which the convention had acted wisely in banishing from France.

In allusion to the operations of the combined powers, they said they saw, without concern, that the Elector of Hanover united his troops to those of traitors and robbers; but the King of England would do well to remember, that England was not Hanover,—should *he* forget it, *they* would not. They expressed an earnest anxiety to promote a triple alliance, *not of crowned heads*, but of the *people* of America, France, and Great Britain, which would give liberty to Europe, and peace to the world.—It was not very easy to perceive how the assistance of the Americans could contribute to give liberty to the nations of Europe, though the motives which induced these reformers to select the French and Americans, as the only people on earth who were worthy to be allied to the English, were perfectly obvious; since they were the only people who had successfully rebelled against their lawful Sovereigns, and who had overthrown the established constitutions of their respective countries.—Such liberty, and such peace, as the French had secured for themselves, and as the English Jacobins wished to obtain for their own country, they seemed

to think could not be purchased too dearly. No loss, they thought, however bloody, could be comparable to the glorious and unexampled advantage of being able to say—*The universe is free! Tyrants and tyranny are no more! Peace reigns on the earth; and it is to the French that mankind are indebted for it!* *

Messieurs Joel Barlow and John Frost, deputed from the Constitutional Society of London, presented an address, breathing much the same spirit, and couched in much the same language, to the National Convention, on the 28th of November. One of these deputies prefaced the address with a speech, in which, after due congratulations on the success of revolutionary principles, and treasonable conduct in France, he assured the Convention, that innumerable societies, of the same sort, were forming themselves, at that moment, in every part of England. Their object was to reform the abuses of government, by the most simple means. And, that no doubt might remain, as to the nature of those means, the orator immediately added, by way of explanation,—"After the *example* given by *France*, REVOLUTIONS will *become easy*;—reason is about to make a rapid progress; and IT WOULD NOT BE EXTRAORDINARY IF, IN A MUCH LESS SPACE OF TIME THAN CAN BE IMAGINED, THE FRENCH SHOULD SEND ADDRESSES OF CONGRATULATION TO A NATIONAL CONVENTION OF ENGLAND!" —This speech perfectly corresponds with the style and sentiments of the address itself, which hailed the Convention as the representatives of a *sovereign people*, and benefactors of mankind; and which, besides general congratulations on the success of the Rebellion, marked each period of peculiar infamy as fit subjects of specific applause.—"Every successive epoch in your political regeneration, has EACH added something to the triumph of liberty; and the GLORIOUS VICTORY, of the 10th of August, has finally prepared the way for a constitution which, enlightened as you are, we trust will be established on the basis of nature and reason."—But the sentiment which renders this address particularly applicable to the history of the present period, is contained

* *A Collection of Addresses, transmitted by certain English Clubs to the National Convention of France, &c.* 8vo. *p. p.* 16. 18.

in the concluding sentence, in which it is asserted, that other nations would soon follow the steps of the French in their career of improvement, and, rising from their lethargy, *would arm themselves for the purpose of claiming the Rights of Man, with that all-powerful voice which man could not resist.** Here was a clear acknowledgment of the *intention* of the seditious clubs, in this country, to overturn the existing constitution by force. The address was signed by Lord Sempill, as President of the Society; by Daniel Adams, as Secretary; and by the two deputies, Barlow and Frost.—It was accompanied by a patriotic gift of one thousand pair of shoes for the French soldiers.

The President of the Convention entered into the true spirit of the proceeding, hailed the deputies as *generous republicans*, and anticipated *the moment in which the French would carry congratulations to the National Convention of England!* About the same time, the Convention was addressed by an English society, established at Paris, who announced the approaching meeting of Parliament, when a reform, in the national representation, would certainly take place; and "FROM THENCE TO THE ENTIRE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REPUBLIC the transition would be easy." Various other addresses, of a similar nature and tendency, were presented at this period.

These publications, and many others, which issued from the press in various forms, and which were circulated with incredible industry, were all strongly indicative, not merely of the sentiments, but of the views and designs, of a great number of disaffected persons in this country, who, encouraged by the success of the French, hoped to produce a Revolution in England, on French principles. That these men were very numerous is most certain; though they meant to deceive others, and were possibly deceived themselves (forming their conclusions rather on their wishes than on their knowledge), as to the real extent of their numbers. They were sufficient, however, to inspire not only the government, but the well-disposed part of the public, (certainly constituting an immense majority), with great and serious alarm.

* Ibid. p. 29. 31.

In the Autumn of 1792, they spoke with confidence of their success; and had probably persuaded themselves that they should succeed. In France the Revolution had been begun, and far advanced, by less formidable numbers;—and had the disaffected in England had the same resources, and as active a leader, though it is not likely they would have met with the same success, it is most certain that they might have excited a civil war, and that great confusion and bloodshed would have ensued.

They had also another advantage, in the want of union among those who abhorred their principles, and were solicitous to counteract their efforts. They themselves met in their various societies, and kept up a regular correspondence with each other, throughout the kingdom. Their enemies, on the contrary, had no meetings,—had no centre of union,—had no means of communication;—the evil was deeply felt, and generally acknowledged; but no remedy was adopted, or even suggested. At this alarming and critical period, a circumstance occurred which supplied one of those striking proofs (many of which must have fallen under every man's observation) of the great public good which may sometimes be effected by the talents and perseverance of a private individual, without the aid of official authority.

On the 17th of November, Mr. Reeves, a barrister, who had gone out to Newfoundland, some months before, in the capacity of Chief Justice to that settlement, returned to London. Having, during his absence, had little intercourse with Europe, he was surprised, beyond measure, to find, on his arrival in the capital, that a great change had taken place in the state of the public mind. The rapid progress of French principles, and the consequent dismay which it excited among the well-disposed part of the community, were, indeed, well calculated to create both alarm and indignation in a man who loved his native country, and who venerated her constitution as the fertile source of every civil and social blessing. He was astonished to learn that the populace had betrayed strong symptoms of a turbulent and intractable spirit; and that men of sense and discernment had deemed it necessary to provide themselves with arms, under the

impression that they should soon be called upon to use them in their own defence.

The very day after his arrival, Mr. Reeves had a consultation with a small party of his legal friends, one of them a respectable judge, now no more; another who actually enjoys a seat on the bench; and a third at present in a high official situation. At this meeting it was determined that the most proper antidote to be opposed to the prevailing poison of the day, was that which counter-associations, composed of loyal and well-affected men, would supply; and Mr. Reeves undertook to create them in a short time. He accordingly drew up an appropriate advertisement, which, operating like an electric shock, produced the desired effect. The public spirit manifested itself with the rapidity of lightning; crowds instantly flocked to the appointed place of meeting;—and it became evident, that nothing more than a rallying-point, which the well-directed zeal of an individual had now supplied, had been wanting to which the real friends of the country might repair, in order to combine their efforts for the resistance of that rising spirit of disaffection which had already assumed so alarming an aspect.

Such was the eagerness of individuals for a public declaration of their sentiments, and such the zeal and activity which marked the conduct of the worthy father of the Loyal Associations, that not more than ten days elapsed between the first conception, and the final execution, of this most seasonable and well-digested plan. A committee, consisting of nineteen independent gentlemen, of different descriptions, was formed; appropriate resolutions were communicated to the public; and, in a very short time, the spirit of loyalty spread through the country and gave birth to similar meetings in every part of the kingdom.

In one of the first of those well-written and impressive papers, which the able pen of Mr. Reeves supplied, the end and object of these associations were clearly defined, and explicitly avowed; the discouragement and suppression of seditious publications, and the supply of cheap books and papers, for the purpose of undeceiving those poor people who had been misled by the infusion of opinions dangerous to

their own welfare and that of the state: the members also agreed to hold themselves in readiness to prevent or suppress tumults or riots, if necessary.—But they wisely resolved, in all their proceedings, to act in constant subordination to the magistrates and the executive government, and in their aid and support, and not otherwise; well aware that their enemies would not fail to accuse them of pursuing a similar course themselves to that which they condemned in others. They strongly marked the difference between the seditious societies and the loyal associations. They declared their opinion, that all private meetings, formed with a design to take cognizance of what was transacted by the executive and legislative powers of the country, were irregular. Such distinct and unharmonious centres they described as having the effect of drawing around themselves some of that force and confidence of the people, which should pass on to their only true centre—the constituted, executive, and legislative authorities of the state. But, they observed, when such an irregularity had been once permitted, and the balance of the system seemed to be affected by it, the equilibrium, perhaps, could not be more naturally restored, than by placing a counterpoise of the same sort on the other side.

Wicked men, by the means of clubs and associations, had been spreading, among the simple and ignorant, seditious opinions, destructive of good government, and the happiness of all.—Good men associated to counteract these evil designs, to support good government, and to continue to all their present happiness. To associate in the forms in which the disaffected did (as appeared by their printed papers), was always seditious, and very often treasonable;—they all appeared to be offenders against the law. To meet, as was now proposed, for suppressing sedition, for propagating peaceable opinions, and for aiding the magistracy, in subordination to the direction of the magistrates, the law allowed it, and the time required it.*

Such were the avowed objects of associations, which, in a few days, changed, as it were, the whole face of the country.—The voice of dis-

* Association Papers, p. 8.

affection, lately so loud, was now silenced, or, at least, reduced to the necessity of uttering its murmurs in private. Confidence succeeded to doubt, apprehension, and dismay; and the hands of government were strengthened by the almost unanimous assurances of adequate support, in the arduous struggle in which it was easy to foresee they must, and would soon, be involved.

Well might it be observed, a few months after the establishment of the first Loyal Association, that it was the general opinion, that the declaration of sentiment which resulted from the forming of associations throughout the kingdom, saved this nation at a time when nothing else could have saved it. The success which attended their endeavours was not tarnished by any thing unworthy or unequal in their subsequent conduct. As they opposed themselves to the madness of sedition with spirit, so they proceeded in their career with firmness, and they bore their success with moderation.

They associated on a special occasion, and for a defined purpose; and when that occasion was passed, and that purpose was served, they suspended their proceedings.—They combined for no private or partial views; not to extol or to depress any party or any individual; their object was general, and they pursued it on general principles. It was neither to set up nor to pull down; it was only to preserve; —an employment free from the heat and malice of personal animosities; they could have no enemies but such as the law would term offenders.*

It was by no means an unnatural supposition, that a scheme, fraught with so much public benefit, had been conceived by Ministers, or, at least, aided and encouraged by them; assertions, indeed, to this effect were advanced with confidence, but in direct opposition to the fact. The first intelligence which the government received of it was from the printed advertisements in the daily papers; their curiosity was, of course, excited, and they soon learnt by whom the plan was

* Ibid. Preface, p. iii. iv.

conceived, digested, and executed. Mr. Pitt, far from giving his countenance or concurrence to it, in the first instance, had great doubts of its policy and expediency. He, indeed, in a very early stage of the business, expressed his wish that a total stop should be put to all further proceedings, as he had it in contemplation to frame a bill for the prevention of all political meetings whatever, except such as were necessary for the exercise of the constitutional right of petition. But although this plan had been adopted with expedition, it had not been executed without much reflection on its nature and consequences. It was the work, too, of one who knew the law and constitution of the country as well as the Minister himself, and who was, probably, better acquainted with the temper and disposition of the people. Mr. Reeves, and those who now acted with him, conceived themselves competent judges of the remedy best adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the times; they were impressed with the conviction, that the period had at length arrived when men must take care of themselves; and, knowing that assemblies of respectable individuals, acting in strict subordination to the constituted authorities of the country, were perfectly legal, they refused to comply with the wishes of Mr. Pitt. The Minister, however, on farther reflection, altered his mind; he expressed his approbation of the committee, when their names were read to him *; and, although he never afforded

* It is the duty of the historian to record the names of those men who first stood forward to stem the torrent of faction which threatened to overwhelm the fair fabric of the Constitution, and who thus set a glorious example to their dismayed countrymen. The following gentlemen composed the committee:

John Reeves, Esq.	Thomas Law, Esq.†	Mr. Alexander Brodie.
John Topham, Esq.	Mr. John Sargeaunt.	Hon. G. Hobart.
John Bowles, Esq.	John Thomas Batt, Esq.	Thomas Plumer, Esq.
John Roberts, Esq.	Mr. George Potter.	Charles Yorke, Esq.
Mr. John Sewell.	Charles Townshend, Esq.	George Ward, Esq.
Peter Nouaille, Esq.	Dr. Halifax.	W. Devaynes, Esq.

† It would appear that Mr. Law, who is brother to Lord Ellenborough, had introduced himself to this meeting with a view rather to act as a spy on the conduct of its members, than to assist them in the execution of their plan.—For, in little more than three weeks after the association was formed, having differed in opinion from the whole of the committee, on a question relating to anonymous informations, he had recourse to the extraordinary proceed-

the associations the smallest pecuniary, or other, assistance, he felt and thought, as every real unprejudiced friend of the country must have felt and thought, respecting the important services which they rendered to the state at a crisis of peculiar alarm, and of imminent danger.

ing of appealing to the public, through the medium of the *Morning Chronicle*, for the purpose of justifying himself, and of accusing his associates. The point in dispute was simply this,—The mother-society became the centre to which intelligence of various kinds was transmitted, relating to the objects for which the members had associated.—Some of these communications contained information against persons who had made open declarations of seditious sentiments, or treasonable designs. The accumulation of such papers rendered it necessary for the committee to decide what should be done with them. They, accordingly, considering that they had no authority themselves, and being of opinion that these matters were not wholly to be despised, resolved to send them to those persons in office who could take legal cognizance of them; and they were thenceforth transmitted, either to the Secretary of State, or to the chief magistrate of the office in Bow-street. This resolution, the most wise and prudent that could be adopted, displeased Mr. Law, who sent it to the *Morning Chronicle;* and, by that means, gave rise to one of the most senseless clamours which the tongue of party ever propagated against the Association, for encouraging anonymous letters and anonymous information.

On the first subsequent meeting of the committee, it was unanimously agreed to erase the name of Mr. Law from the list of its members; at the same time they passed the following resolutions, as explanatory of their motives in this particular act, and as expressive of their sentiments on the subject which gave rise to it.

"The committee are sorry they are under the necessity of coming to such a resolution "with regard to one of their members; but it appears to them that the harmony which "should be preserved in any society, can never subsist without an entire confidence in every "one of its members; and this they think can no longer be reposed in a person who pub-"lishes, in a common news-paper, any thing that relates to what passes at their meetings.

"With respect to that gentleman's proposal (in which he stood single) to burn all letters "from anonymous correspondents, merely because they were such, the committee continue "to hold the same opinion they then did, and which, they believe, is the opinion held by "most persons who ever thought upon the subject. They have always treated anonymous "information as an individual would treat it; if it appeared probable, and of a nature that "deserved notice, they have thought it might be made a ground of inquiry; if otherwise, "that it should be disregarded entirely. In acting thus, they believe they have discharged "the duty of good citizens, as well as that of persons who have associated for the express "purpose of defending the Laws and Constitution of their country." *Association Papers*, p. 3, 4.

Mr. Thomas Law afterwards emigrated to America (to that very country which the disaffected, at this period, held up as an example and model to England), where he settled, and has ever since remained. This act of self-banishment, is, of itself, sufficient to characterize the motives which induced him to become a member of the Loyal Association.

The expences attending the circulation of cheap pamphlets and papers, and all other costs incurred by this association, were defrayed entirely by the voluntary contributions of its members, which, however, never exceeded a few hundred pounds. Though the expence was little, the benefit was great. But the chief advantage derived from those meetings, was the encouragement afforded to that general declaration of sentiment, which was the most effectual means of suppressing disaffection in the bud, of crushing the rising hopes of treason, and of driving the monster, Sedition, into the inmost recesses of its den. At the same time, they gave confidence to government, and strength to the efforts of the nation.

The Minister now began to assume a tone of greater decision, and to pursue a more marked and determined line of conduct. Military preparations were made, as in a time of acknowledged danger; the militia were suddenly embodied, and Parliament was summoned under a special provision, before the expiration of the period for which it had been prorogued.

Such was the state of the country when the great council of the nation was opened on the 13th of December.—The King observed to his Parliament, that he should have been happy, if he could have announced to them the secure and undisturbed continuance of all the blessings which his subjects had derived from a state of tranquillity; but events had recently occurred which required their united vigilance and exertion, in order to preserve the advantages which they had hitherto enjoyed. The seditious practices which had been, in a great measure, checked by their firm and explicit declaration in the last Session, and by the general concurrence of his people in the same sentiments, had of late been more openly renewed, and with increased activity. A spirit of tumult and disorder (the natural consequence of such practices) had shewn itself in acts of riot and insurrection, which required the interposition of a military force in support of the civil magistrate. The industry employed to excite discontent, on various pretexts, and in different parts of the kingdom, had appeared to proceed from a design to attempt the destruction of our happy

constitution, and the subversion of all order and government; and this design had evidently been pursued in connection and concert with persons in foreign countries.

His Majesty dwelt on his careful observance of a strict neutrality in the war then raging on the Continent, and on his uniform abstinence from any interposition with respect to the internal affairs of France. Indeed, it became evident, from subsequent events, that this caution, however laudable the motive from which it proceeded, had been carried to a dangerous and impolitic excess;—for, had the British Minister entered early, and heartily, into the continental confederacy, for checking the aggressive disposition, the turbulent spirit, and the hostile intentions, of the political fanatics of France, it is highly probable that a different turn might have been given to the Revolution; that a system of rational liberty might have been established; that the lives of millions might have been saved; and that the French annals might have been secured against the disgrace which the commission of nameless and numberless crimes has indelibly impressed upon them.

It was impossible, however, for the King to see, (as he told his Parliament,) without the most serious uneasiness, the strong and increasing indications which had appeared in France, of an intention to excite disturbances in other countries, to disregard the rights of neutral nations, and to pursue views of conquest and aggrandizement, as well as to adopt, towards his allies, the Dutch, (who had observed the same neutrality with himself,) measures which were neither conformable to the law of nations, nor to the positive stipulations of existing treaties.

Such were the reasons assigned, in the Speech from the Throne, for the defensive measures which the Ministers had lately adopted, and which they considered as equally calculated for the preservation of internal tranquillity, and for giving efficacy to their efforts for securing a continuance of the blessings of peace. The debates, on the address, afforded the usual opportunity to the members of both Houses, for

declaring their different opinions on the state of public affairs. Mr. Pitt, having lately accepted the office of Warden of the Cinque Ports, which vacated his seat, was not present at the opening of Parliament. Mr. Dundas, therefore, took the lead in defending the conduct of Ministers, and was most ably supported by Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham;—the opposition was led by Mr. Fox, who was followed by Lord Wycombe. The reality of the alleged dangers constituted the principal ground of difference. Mr. Fox denied their existence, and called for specific proofs; while the Ministers insisted on the notoriety of the facts, as affording the most convincing proofs. The danger stared every man in the face; and, but a few weeks before, had spread dismay among all the well-affected part of the community;—yet was it confidently asserted, in the House of Commons, that the assertions in the speech were all false and calumnious; that nothing like disaffection was to be seen in the kingdom, but that an universal spirit of loyalty pervaded every quarter. The measures taken to prevent the effects of a danger, the existence of which was so confidently denied, were represented as fraudulent, unnecessary, and intended only as the means by which the passions of the country might be inflamed, and the design of the Minister, to plunge the nation in a continental war, be favoured and supported. But even granting, for the sake of argument, that some discontent might prevail, the remedies prescribed, by the quacks of opposition, as infallible specifics, were *a repeal of the test and corporation acts*, and *a reform of the House of Commons*. That the House of Commons required *reformation*, was a question which admitted of little doubt; but they must have been wretched empirics indeed, who could prescribe for their own country the very remedies which had proved fatal to the Monarchy of France. Unbounded concession had relaxed all the energies of government; and indiscriminate reform accomplished its destruction. The French King, unhappily, followed the very advice here given to the British Monarch, He, weakly and vainly, attempted to silence the clamours of disaffection, by an easy compliance with every demand.—The natural consequence followed; the claimants became more importunate, as his facility increased; till *they* COMMANDED, and *he* SUED IN VAIN.

The opposition attacked the Loyal Associations, and represented them as more dangerous than the seditious clubs. They even charged them with attempts to poison the minds of the people, by promulgating the Tory doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance; a doctrine which they who condemned it evidently did not understand. They seem to have forgotten, too, that, without the aid of the Tories, the Revolution of 1688 would never have been accomplished. The tract, circulated by the Association, at the Crown and Anchor, which most excited the indignation of the modern Whigs, was one entitled, *A Letter from Thomas Bull to his brother John*, which was the production of the venerable Mr. JONES, of *Nayland*, who had more attentively studied, and more ably appreciated, the British constitution, and the relative duties of the Sovereign and of his subjects, than Mr. Fox, and the whole band of juvenile politicians, who now clamoured in his train.

The assertions of the opposition, respecting the cause and the object of the late preparations, were fully contradicted by the Ministers; who insisted, that they were imperatively called for by the alarming state of the country; and by the conduct of the ruling party in France. They proved, from the various addresses presented by the factious members of the Jacobin clubs in England, to the French Convention, by the violent resolutions which they had published, and by the seditious pamphlets which they had circulated, the reality of that danger, and the existence of that disaffection, which had been imputed in the speech from the throne. They clearly demonstrated, also, from the public declarations of the leading men in France, their fixed determination to render their principles and their arms the means of producing similar revolutions in other countries; and of aggrandizing their own at their expence. In violation of their own decrees, and in contempt of existing treaties, they had annexed Savoy to France, and opened the navigation of the Scheldt.

In the course of this discussion, Mr. Fox took an opportunity of renewing his expressions of attachment to the principles and the patriots of France, triumphing in their triumphs, and lamenting over

their defeats!—In short, he seemed to conceive that he had gone too far, in his avowed admiration of the French Revolution to retract, and that his only chance for distinction, now that he was forsaken by all that was respectable in his party, was, by becoming the chief of a new faction, by encouraging its members to proceed to the greatest extremities, and, by his countenance, and indirect support, to stimulate them to the avowal of principles, and of designs, which he would not himself dare to acknowledge. He moved an amendment to the address, which was negatived by a majority of two hundred and forty.

Decisive as this majority unquestionably was, it did not deter Mr. Fox from renewing his opposition to the address on the succeeding night, when the report was brought up. He then, however, deemed it expedient to modify his sentiments, by declaring his belief, that the aggrandizement of France ought to be watched with a jealous eye by Great Britain. But, in his opinion, the best mode of preventing its evil effects would be to conciliate the favour, and to court the alliance, of the French Republic, whose cause, he asserted, was daily becoming more popular on the Continent; while no reliance could be placed on either Prussia or Austria, the leaders of whose armies were destitute alike of honour and of humanity.—Mr. Fox concluded this philippic on the enemies of France, with a motion, the object of which was, to intreat the King to exert all the arts of negotiation for the preservation of peace with the French Republic.

Mr. Fox's motion was seconded by Mr. Sheridan, and opposed by Mr. Burke, who aptly observed, that if no reliance could now be placed on the fidelity of our allies, it was not likely to be secured in future by paying court to their implacable enemies.—Nor, if we were disposed to submit to such degradation, were we, by any means, certain of attaining our object. And yet the country were called upon to renounce their existing connections with the ancient and established governments in Europe, for the purpose of crouching, without effect, to a species of republic, which bore no analogy to any other which was, or ever had been, in the world; a republic founded on principles of

universal seduction, union, and confraternity, so wild in her ambitious projects, and views of Proselytism, as to aim at the subversion of all other forms of government, and the substitution of her own in their stead. Like the propagator of the doctrine of the Koran, with a new-fangled code of opinions in one hand, and the sword in the other, she was resolved to enforce conviction on surrounding nations, and compel them to adopt her own system of revolutionary freedom. Mr. Fox's motion was negatived without a division. Still Mr. Fox was not discouraged.—He renewed the discussion the very next day, when he proposed that an ambassador should be sent to France to treat with those persons who exercised, provisionally, the functions of the executive government in that country. This proposal, however, for opening a treaty with rebels and traitors, who had overthrown the Monarchy, and were about to murder the Monarch, was indignantly rejected by a great majority of the House.

But although, on these important points, a radical difference of opinion, and indeed of principle, prevailed, the members of both parties were unanimous in their sentiments respecting the approaching fate of the unhappy Louis. Mr. Sheridan, on the 20th of December, introduced the subject, and expressed his conviction that the public mind throughout France, would be considerably influenced, could it be known that the unjust and inhuman act of cruelty about to be committed was universally deprecated and deplored by the people of Great Britain. Mr. Fox expressed similar sentiments,—observing, that the manner in which the Royal Family of France were treated, was unjust, cruel, and pusillanimous.—He was of opinion, that the best mode of treating a subject so delicate, would be to address the King for a copy of the instructions sent to Lord Gower on his recal, and then to thank his Majesty for the communication, adding some expressions of abhorrence against the late transactions in France. In this opinion, Mr. Pitt concurred, and he immediately moved for the instructions, observing, at the same time, that, although to solicit any thing from France would be to solicit the eternal disgrace of this country, yet he considered it extremely proper to express as general an abhorrence as possible of the miserable and horrid catastrophe with

which the French King was, at that moment, threatened. But when the papers were produced the next day, it was judged to be the safest way, merely to move that they might lie on the table of the House for the members to peruse; it being apprehended that a vote, expressive of the sentiments of the House, might probably accelerate the event which it was intended to avert. Mr. Fox truly characterized the trial of Louis the Sixteenth, as repugnant to all the common feelings of mankind, and contrary to all the fundamental principles of law. The same subject was adverted to, in the House of Lords, by the Marquis of Lansdowne, who proposed to send an ambassador to France; but Lord Grenville successfully opposed the motion, on which no division took place. In the course of his speech, the Marquis, alluding to the present situation of the French King, observed, that such a Prince was not a proper object of punishment, who during a reign of sixteen years, had made the happiness of his subjects his constant study.

Among the measures of precaution which Mr. Pitt now deemed necessary for the preservation of public order, was a bill for subjecting Aliens to particular regulations and restrictions. The motive which gave rise to this bill was the great influx of Frenchmen into the kingdom, who came hither for the purpose of maintaining a closer communication with the seditious clubs, and for directing the efforts of their members to the subversion of the constitution; a task for which they were eminently qualified. It is a matter of considerable doubt, whether it is proper, judicious, or strictly constitutional, to have recourse to the authority of Parliament, for a legislative sanction to measures, the adoption of which is within the legal prerogative of the Crown. Such conduct is liable to a very strong objection, inasmuch as it has a natural tendency to weaken the prerogative; for as it is to be inferred that the interposition of Parliament will not be called for, unless in cases of necessity, the very fact of such interposition will, in time, be deemed sufficient to prove the defect of the prerogative, where no defect was ever before supposed to exist. In respect of Aliens, there could be no doubt that the King had the power either to subject them, on their arrival in the country, to any regulations

which he might deem necessary for the security of the state, or to send them out of the country, whenever he saw reason to withdraw from them that protection which it was competent to him, by the general law of nations, to grant or to refuse. The application to Parliament, therefore, could not be necessary; but it was deemed prudent by ministers, who, being responsible for any abuse, or improper exercise, of the prerogative, were better satisfied to regulate their conduct by the decision of the legislature.

This bill, though supported by the most respectable members of the opposition in both Houses, was strenuously resisted by Lords Guildford and Lauderdale, in the Upper House, and by Mr. Fox, and his few remaining followers, in the Lower House.* It occasioned also some further declaration of sentiment, on the part of Mr. Fox, and of those who had seceded from his party, respecting the present state of

* This Alien-bill was made a subject of complaint against the British government by Mr. Chauvelin, and by the French minister, Le Brun, who described it as "rigorous, unjust, unusual, and contrary to all the usages observed by nations to each other," as well as a direct violation of the commercial treaty between the two countries. Putting the palpable falsehood of this assertion out of the question, it is curious to observe, that Mr. Le Brun here pronounced a sentence of condemnation on the French government; since, in the month of May, 1792, the Legislative Assembly passed a decree against Aliens, similar in tenor to the British Act, but more offensive in its provisions. By this decree, every foreigner, without any exception, was compelled, within eight days, to declare his name and character, his usual residence, and his abode at Paris, and also to produce his passport, if he had one, to the committee of the Section, under severe penalties in case of omission. This, and the other provisions of the decree, as applied to Englishmen, were a direct breach of the article of the commercial treaty quoted by Le Brun. When this minister, too, asserted, at the same time, that the English in France had experienced every kindness, he did not more strictly adhere to truth. On the eighteenth of September, 1792, Kersaint complained to the Assembly of the scandalous treatment to which the British were exposed. "There remains," said he, "but one nation in Europe *whose neutrality as to the affairs of France, is decidedly pronounced*—it is England. Yet there are no means left unemployed to sour the minds of those English who are now residing in France.—At this moment there are no obstacles which are not used to shackle foreigners, *and particularly the English*. There is nothing which, since the tenth of August, the commune has left undone to irritate the latter, either by refusing them passports, or by disturbing them, in every possible manner, at the places of their habitation."

Such a testimony as that of Kersaint, one of the most violent enemies of Great Britain, is highly valuable to corroborate the assertions of Mr. Pitt, respecting the determined neutrality of the British government.

public affairs, both in England and in France. This only served to confirm the difference which was already known to exist between them. Mr. Burke most clearly proved that the exultation which Mr. Fox had manifested, on the success of the French, was totally inconsistent with the dread which he had expressed of the aggrandizement of France; because her aggrandizement was both the object and the consequence of their success. He expatiated, with his usual energy, on the nature of French fraternization, and of that liberty which the revolutionists were so anxious to propagate throughout Europe, by plunder and the sword; and which he truly characterized, as a liberty without property, without honour, without morals, without order, without government, and without personal security. These apostles of liberty had boasted of having destroyed the Bastille, while they had converted every man's house in Paris into a Bastille.

Mr. Burke quoted the speech of Mr. Dupont in the Convention, to shew that atheism was the first fruits of French liberty. This man had profligately declared the religion of Jesus Christ to be unfit to be tolerated in a republic, because it was a monarchical religion, and preached subjection and obedience to God! And the Convention received the declaration with loud applause. He pathetically deplored the natural effects of such systematized profligacy, which went to deprive man of all happiness in life, and of all consolation in death. He considered the Alien-bill as calculated to save the country; for, although the number of suspicious Aliens in the kingdom at this time might be small, yet it should be remembered, that the horrid massacres at Paris, in the preceding autumn, had been perpetrated by a body of men, not exceeding two hundred. He averred that, at that very moment, three thousand daggers, of a peculiar construction, were manufacturing at Birmingham, under the orders of an individual. How many of these were intended for exportation, and how many were designed for home consumption, had not yet been ascertained. He then produced one of these daggers, and threw it on the floor, exclaiming, —" These are the presents which France designs for you.—By these would she propagate her freedom and fraternity.—But may Heaven avert her principles from our minds, and her daggers from our hearts."

The debates on the bill were renewed, in its different stages, when Mr. Fox took the lead in opposing it; but it was finally carried by a decisive majority.

[1793.] The known and recorded sentiments of the British Parliament had as little influence as a regard for justice, or attention to existing laws, on the minds of the French rebels, who had dethroned their Sovereign, and usurped his authority.—After a mock trial, in which all the forms of justice, and all the principles of law, were violated without scruple, and without reserve, the virtuous Louis was doomed to the scaffold. His murder was perpetrated on the 21st of January; and in his last moments he displayed that christian patience, resignation, and fortitude, which a consciousness of innocence, and a firm confidence in the promises of God, are alone competent to inspire. After this atrocious deed, which fixes an indelible stain on the national character of the French people, who tamely looked on, while their best friend fell a victim to their ruthless tyrants, it was not possible to suffer the representative of the deceased Monarch to continue his residence at the British Court.—Mr. Chauvelin was, therefore, ordered to quit the kingdom, within eight days; and, on the 28th of the month, the King sent a message to both Houses of Parliament, informing them, that he had given directions for laying before them copies of several papers, which had been received from M. Chauvelin, by the Secretary of State, and the answers thereto; and likewise a copy of an order made by his Majesty in Council, and transmitted, by his Majesty's commands, to the said M. Chauvelin, in consequence of the accounts of the atrocious act recently perpetrated at Paris. In the present situation of affairs, his Majesty thought it indispensably necessary to make a further augmentation of his forces by sea and land; and relied on the known affection and zeal of the House of Commons, to enable him to take the most effectual measures in the present important juncture, for maintaining the security and rights of his own dominions; for supporting his allies; and for opposing views of aggrandizement and ambition on the part of France, which would be, at all times, dangerous to the general interests of Europe, but were peculiarly so, when connected with the propagation of principles which led to the violation of the most sacred

duties, and were utterly subversive of the peace and order of all civil society.

This message was taken into consideration, by the House of Commons, on the first of February, when Mr. Pitt entered into a copious and luminous illustration of French principles, and took an extensive view of the subjects, both foreign and domestic, to which the message related. He first adverted to the murder of the King of France, which he truly characterized as a calamitous event, as a dreadful outrage against every principle of religion, of justice, and of humanity, which had created one general sentiment of indignation and abhorrence in every part of this island, and, most undoubtedly, had produced the same effect in every civilized country. At the same time that he said this, he was aware that he should better consult, not only his own feelings, but those of the House, if considerations of duty would permit him to draw a veil over the whole of that transaction, because it was, in fact, in itself, in all those circumstances which led to it, in all which attended it, and in all which had followed, or which were likely to follow it thereafter, so full of every subject of grief and horror, that it was painful for the mind to dwell upon it. It was a subject which, for the honour of human nature, it would be better, if possible, to dismiss from our memories, to expunge from the page of history, and to conceal it, both then and for ever, from the observation of the world:

> Excidat ille dies ævo, neu postera credant
> Secula; nos certè taceamus, et obruta multâ
> Nocte tegi nostræ patiamur crimine gentis.

These were the words of a great historian of France, (de Thou) in a former period, and were applied to an occasion (the massacre of the Protestants, on St. Bartholomew's day) which had always been considered as an eternal reproach to the French nation.—And the atrocious acts, lately perpetrated at Paris, were, perhaps, the only instances that furnished any match to that dreadful and complicated scene of proscription and blood. But, whatever might be their feelings on that subject, since, alas! it was not possible that the present age should not

be contaminated with its guilt,—since it was not possible that the knowledge of it should not be conveyed by the breath of tradition to posterity, there was a duty which we were called upon to perform,—to enter our solemn protestation, that, on every principle by which men of justice and honour were actuated, it was the foulest and most atrocious deed which the history of the world had yet had occasion to attest.

Mr. Pitt then reminded the House of another duty, which related to the interest of every country in Europe;—this was to derive from this atrocious deed all the benefit which, as a lesson, it was calculated to confer, by shewing what was the natural effect of those principles, which the French had adopted with so much cagerness, and which they propagated with so much industry. In this one instance was exhibited the effect of principles, which, originally, rested upon grounds that dissolved whatever had hitherto received the best sanctions of human legislation, which were contrary to every principle of law, human and divine. Presumptuously relying on their deceitful and destructive theories, they had rejected every benefit which the world had hitherto received from the effect of either reason or experience, or even of revelation itself.—The consequences of these principles had received an illustration from the fate of one, whom every human being commiserated.—Their consequences equally tended to shake the security of commerce, and to rob the meanest individual in every country of whatever was most dear and valuable to him.

They struck directly at the authority of all regular government, and at the inviolable personal situation of every lawful Sovereign.—Mr. Pitt, therefore, felt it to be, not merely a tribute due to humanity, not merely an effusion of those feelings which he possessed in common with every man in the country, but a proper subject of reflection to fix the minds of the House on the effect of these principles, which had been thus dreadfully attested, before they proceeded to consider what measures it became the country to adopt, in order to avert their contagion, and to prevent their growth and progress in Europe.

But, strong as his feelings were on the subject, he would entreat the House, if possible, to consider even that calamitous event as a subject rather of reason and reflection, than of sentiment and feeling. Sentiment was often unavailing, but reason and reflection would lead to that knowledge which was necessary to the salvation of this and of all other countries. He was persuaded the House would not feel it as a circumstance which they were to take upon themselves, but would feel it in the way in which he had put it, as a proof of the calamities arising out of the most abominable and detestable principles,—as a proof of the absence of all morals, of all justice, of all humanity, and of every principle which did honour to human nature;—and that it furnished the strongest demonstration of the dreadful outrage which the crimes and follies of France had suggested to them. He was persuaded that the House would be sensible that these principles, and the effects of them, were to be narrowly watched, that there could be no leading consideration more nearly connected with the prospect of all countries, and, most of all, that there could be no consideration more deserving the attention of that House, than to crush, and destroy, principles which were so dangerous, and so destructive of every blessing which the country enjoyed under its free and excellent constitution. Most truly and emphatically did Mr. Pitt state, that we owed our present happiness and prosperity, which had never been equalled in the annals of mankind, to a mixed monarchical government.—The people felt and knew they were happy under that form of government.—They considered it as their first duty to maintain and reverence the British Constitution, which, for wise and just reasons of lasting and internal policy, attached inviolability to the sacred person of the Sovereign, though, at the same time, by the responsibility annexed to government, by the check of a wise system of laws, and by a mixture of aristocratic and democratic power in the frame of legislation, it had equally exempted itself from the danger arising from the exercise of absolute power on the one hand, and the still more dangerous contagion of popular licentiousness on the other. The equity of our laws, and the freedom of our political system, had been the envy of every surrounding nation. In this country, no man, in consequence of his riches or his rank, was so high as to be above

the reach of the laws, and no individual was so poor, or so inconsiderable, as not to be within their protection. It was the boast of the law of England, that it afforded equal security and protection to the high and the low—to the rich and to the poor.

Such was the envied situation of England, which might be compared, were the expression allowable, to the situation of the temperate zone on the surface of the globe, formed, by the bounty of Providence, for habitation and enjoyment, being equally removed from the polar frosts on the one hand, and from the scorching heat of the torrid zone on the other;—where the vicissitude of the seasons, and the variety of the climate, contributed to the vigour and health of its inhabitants, and to the fertility of its soil;—where pestilence and famine were unknown, as well as earthquakes, hurricanes, and all their dreadful consequences.—Such was the situation, the fortunate situation, of Britain; and what a splendid contrast did it form to the situation of that country, which was exposed to all the tremendous consequences of that ungovernable, that intolerable, and destroying spirit, which carried ruin and desolation wherever it went.

Principles, like these, were not the natural produce of Great Britain, and it ought, Mr. Pitt said, to be the first duty of the House, and their principal concern, to take the most effectual measures for putting a stop to their growth and progress in this country, as well as in the other nations of Europe. After these preliminary observations, Mr. Pitt proceeded to consider more particularly the circumstances which had given rise to his Majesty's message. He divided the papers, presented to the House, into two parts; those which had been before published to the world, and those which were now made public for the first time. Previous to the meeting of Parliament, his Majesty had observed the strictest neutrality with respect to France. He had taken no part whatever in the regulation of her internal government. He had given her no cause of complaint; and, therefore, he had an undoubted right to expect, that France would cautiously avoid every measure which could furnish any ground of complaint to his Majesty. He might also well expect, that France would have respected the rights of himself

and of his allies. His Majesty might, most of all, expect that, in the troubled state of that country, they would not choose to attempt an interference with the internal government of this country, for the sole purpose of creating dissension among us, and of disturbing a scene of unexampled felicity. But, fortunately for England, they did not succeed.

Mr. Pitt then proceeded to analyze the papers before the House, and to draw the most just and natural inferences from their contents. In the first communication from Mr. Chauvelin, which he noticed, dated on the 12th of May, 1792, the King of France declared, in express terms, that, "religiously faithful to the constitution, whatever may be finally the fate of arms in this war, *France rejects all ideas of aggrandizement;*"—and, further, that France entertained *the most pacific dispositions*, and would, at all times, *shew respect for the laws, the customs, and the forms of government, of other nations.* Louis further proclaimed his determination, publicly and severely to disavow all those of his agents who should dare to depart, for an instant, from that respect, either by fomenting or favouring insurrections against the established order, or by interposing in any manner whatever in the interior policy of such states, "*under pretence of a proselytism which, exercised in the dominions of friendly powers, would be a real violation of the law of nations.*" Here the French government passed a sentence upon their own conduct. It was evident, Mr. Pitt observed, that the conduct of France had been directly the reverse of the principles laid down in this paper, which she had violated in every instance in which it was in her power. In the month of June, similar professions were made by the French King, to which was added a voluntary promise to respect the rights of the allies of Great Britain. The return made to these assurances was, the observance, on the part of England, of the most rigorous neutrality.

These assurances went to three points—to a determination to abstain from views of aggrandizement;—not to interfere with the government of neutral nations, which was admitted to be a violation of the law of nations;—and to observe the rights of his Majesty and his allies. Mr.

Pitt then entered into a consideration of the conduct of France, under her new system, as applicable to each of these points. He shewed that she had, both by her words and actions, manifested a determination, if not checked by force, to act on principles of aggrandizement. She had completely disclaimed that maxim, "that, whatever was the fate of her arms, in war, France rejected all ideas of aggrandizement." She had employed the first moment of success publicly to contradict such declaration. She had availed herself of the success of her arms in Savoy, without even attempting the ceremony of disguise, (after having professed her determination to confine herself within her ancient limits), to annex it for ever to the new Sovereignty of France. They had, by their decree (of the 19th of November*), announced a determination to carry on a similar operation in every country into which their arms can be carried, with a view to do the same thing in substance, if not in name.

Their decree, of the 18th of December,† contained a fair illustra-

* The decree here alluded to was drawn up in these comprehensive terms: "The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that they will grant FRATERNITY *and* ASSISTANCE *to* ALL PEOPLE *who wish to* recover their liberty; and they charge the executive powers to send the necessary orders to the generals, to give assistance to such people, and to defend those citizens, who have suffered, or may suffer, in the cause of liberty." This decree was, on the motion of *Serjeant*, ordered to be "*translated*, and *printed* IN ALL LANGUAGES."

† In pursuance of the principles promulgated by the decree of the 19th of November, the National Convention passed another decree, on the 15th of December, by which their Generals were ordered to regulate their conduct, in the countries which their armies then occupied, or might afterwards occupy. In the preamble to this decree they expressly declared, that *their principles would not permit them to acknowledge any of the institutions militating against the Sovereignty of the People;* and the various articles exhibit a complete system of demolition. They insist on the immediate *suppression of all existing authorities*, the *abolition* of *rank and privileges* of every description; and the suppression of all existing imposts; nay, these friends to freedom even declare, they will treat as enemies a whole people *(un peuple entier)* who shall presume to reject liberty and equality, or enter into a treaty with a Prince, or privileged casts!—It is worthy of remark, that *the very day* on which this decree, containing a systematic plan for disorganizing all lawful governments, passed the Convention, the provisional Executive Council wrote to their agent, Chauvelin, instructing him to disavow all hostile intentions on the part of France, and to proclaim her detestation of the idea of a war with England!—*Letter to the Earl of Lauderdale*, p. 53, 54.

tion and confirmation of their principles and designs. They had there expressly stated the plan on which they meant to act. Whenever they obtained a temporary success, whatever was the situation of the country into which they entered, whatever might have been its antecedent conduct, whatever might be its political connections, they had determined not to abandon the possession of it, till they had effected the utter and absolute subversion of its form of government, of every ancient, every established, usage, however long they might have existed, and however much they might have been revered. They would not accept under the name of liberty, any model of government, but that which was conformable to their own opinions and ideas; and all men must learn, from the mouth of their cannon, the propagation of their system, in every part of the world. They had regularly and boldly avowed these instructions, which they sent to the commissioners,* who were to carry them into execution. They had stated to them a revolutionary principle and order, for the purpose of being applied in every country in which the French arms should be crowned with success. They had stated, that they would organize every country, by a disorganizing principle; and, afterwards, they had the effrontery to assert, that all this was done by the will of the people. By that will, wherever French arms were triumphant, revolutions must take place. The plain question then occurred, what constituted such will?—It was the power of the French. They had explained what the liberty was which they proposed to give to every nation, but to compel them to receive it by force, if they were not disposed to accept it voluntarily. They took every opportunity to destroy, wherever they went, every institution, the most sacred, and the most just; and, under the name of liberty, they had resolved to make every country, in substance, a province dependent on themselves, through the despotism of Jacobin Societies. This had given a more fatal blow to the liberties of mankind, than any which they had suffered, even from the boldest attempts of the most aspiring Monarch. It was evident, therefore, that France had trampled upon all laws, human and divine. She had, at last, avowed the most insatiate

* These instructions are to be found in the *Mémoires historiques et politiques sur la Revolution de la Belgique et du Pays de Liege;* by Publicola Chaussard, one of the commissioners.

ambition, and the greatest contempt for the law of nations, which all independent States had hitherto professed most religiously to observe; and, unless she was stopped in her career, all Europe must soon learn their ideas of justice,—the law of nations—models of government—and principles of liberty,—from the mouth of the French cannon.

Mr. Pitt next adverted to the practical effect of the new French system in the Netherlands. In allusion to that country, the French government, in one of its communications with the British Ministry, declared, that France "has renounced, and again renounces, every conquest; and her occupation of the Low Countries shall only continue during the war, and the time which may be necessary for the Belgians to ensure and consolidate their liberty; after which they will be independent and happy. France will find her reward in their felicity." In order to prove, that this meant nothing less than the total subjection of the people to an unqualified dependence on France, he instanced the conduct of Dumouriez, on his entrance into Brussels, where he used military force to prevent the inhabitants from destroying the tree of liberty; and the reception, by the Convention, of an address from the people of Mons, desiring that the province of Hainault might be added to France as an 85th department. This address was referred to a committee, who were instructed to report the form in which countries, wishing to unite with France, were to be admitted into the union; so that the receiving similar applications was to be a fixed and standing principle, which, in its consequences, if not timely prevented, must destroy the liberties and independence of England, as well as of all Europe.

He justly considered the decree of the 19th of November, which was ordered to be printed in all languages, as clearly extending its application to every country, and to England, of course, whatever the French government might pretend to the contrary. The explanation attempted, by which the application of the decree was confined to the single case of a declaration of the GENERAL WILL of a country, was regarded as nugatory and absurd: indeed, it was highly preposterous, because, when the people were *unanimous* (and their unanimity is

necessary to constitute the GENERAL WILL) they could have no opposition to encounter, and had, therefore, no assistance to solicit. But the whole context of the language, as well of the decree as of the discussions which preceded and followed it, and of the subsequent explanation, shewed the clearest intention to propagate their principles all over the world: their explanations contained only an avowal and repetition of the offence. They had proscribed royalty as a crime, and would not be satisfied with any thing less than its total destruction. The dreadful sentence which they had executed on their own unfortunate Monarch, applied to every Sovereign then existing.—And, lest any doubt should remain as to the design of extending their system to this country, the conduct of the National Convention had applied it, by repeated acts, to England by name, which rendered any explanation, on their part, unsatisfactory and unavailing. There was no society in England, however contemptible in their numbers, however desperate in their principles, and however questionable in their existence, who possessed the recommendations of treason and disloyalty, who were not cherished, justified, applauded, and treated even with a degree of theatrical extravagance, at the bar of the National Convention. Could any one who read the answers given to these men, doubt, for a moment, whether England was one of the countries into which they wished to introduce a spirit of proselytism which, exercised in the dominions of friendly powers, they themselves admitted would be a violation of the law of nations?

In examining the third and last point, the violation of the rights of his Majesty, and of his allies, Mr. Pitt reprobated the aggressive conduct of France, in forcibly attempting to open the navigation of the river Scheldt, in which she had no right to interfere, unless she were Sovereign of the Low Countries, or boldly professed herself the general arbitress of Europe. Her conduct, in this instance, was greatly aggravated by the circumstance of her being bound, by the faith of solemn and recent treaties, to secure to the Dutch the exclusive navigation of the Scheldt, and to oppose the opening that river, if any other power should attempt it. If France were the Sovereign of the Low Countries, she would only succeed to the rights which

were enjoyed by the House of Austria; and if she possessed the sovereignty, with all the advantage, she must also take it with all its incumbrances, of which the shutting up of the Scheldt was one. France could have no right to annul the stipulations relative to the Scheldt, unless she had also the right to set aside, equally, all the other treaties between all the powers of Europe, and all the other rights of England or of her allies. England would never consent that France should arrogate the power of annulling, at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a natural right, of which she makes herself the only judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties, and guaranteed by all the Powers. Such a violation of right as France had been guilty of, it would be difficult to find in the history of the world. The conduct of that nation was, in the highest degree, arbitrary, capricious, and founded upon no one principle of reason or of justice. They declared that this treaty was antiquated, and either extorted by despotism, or procured by corruption.—Yet, the very last year, had this new and enlightened nation renewed her assurances of respect for all the rights of his Majesty's allies, without any exception, without any reservation; so that the advancement of this claim was directly contrary to their recent professions. From the treaty of Munster, down to the year 1785, the exclusive navigation of the Scheldt had been one of the established rights of Holland. If it were urged as a reason for not stepping forward, at such a crisis, in support of our ally, that no formal requisition had been made for that purpose, it was contended, by Mr. Pitt, that the obvious necessity of such support was a sufficient reason for granting it; besides, it was intimated, that the sudden effect of French ambition, and of French arms, might have rendered the government of Holland afraid to make a formal requisition. But this was no reason for England to be inactive and slothful; and, unless we meant to stand by, and to suffer state after state to be subverted, and reduced under the power of France, we must now declare our firm resolution to oppose those principles of ambition and aggrandizement, which had for their object the destruction of England, of Europe, and of the World.

The next point for consideration was, whether the papers before the

House contained an answer to the past, or gave any security for the future? They supplied no such answer;—they afforded no such security. —The explanations of the offensive decree of the Convention, of the 19th of November, was nothing more than an advertisement for treason and rebellion. The reception which the delegates from the societies in England experienced at Paris, was the best proof of the real intention of the French government. Though the numbers of these clubs had been deemed too contemptible for the animadversion of the law, or the notice of our own executive government, they were considered enough for the National Convention, which chose to regard them as the clear, undisputed, constituted organ of the will of the people. What reliance could be placed on all their explanations, after the avowal of principles to the last degree dangerous to the liberty, the constitution, the independence, and the very existence, of the country.

In further illustration of the real sentiments and designs of the French Rulers, a letter from one of them, MONGE, addressed to the friends of liberty, in the different sea-ports of France, and bearing date the 31st of December, 1792, only four days after a communication from Chauvelin to Lord Grenville, in which that same council had complained that a harsh construction had been put, by the British Ministry, on the conduct of France, and, at the same time, professed the strongest friendship for Great Britain, was read by Mr. Pitt.—In this letter England and Spain were represented as two *tyrannical* governments, which, after *persecuting the patriots* in their own territories, thought they should be able to influence the judgment to be pronounced on *the tyrant Louis*.—But the people of France would not suffer laws to be dictated to them by a tyrant.— "The King and his Parliament mean to make war against us! *Will the English Republicans suffer it?* Already these free men shew their discontent, and the repugnance which they have to bear arms against their brothers, the French. Well! we will fly to their succour; we will make a descent on the island; we will lodge there fifty thousand caps of liberty; we will plant there the sacred tree, and we will stretch out our arms to our republican brethren; *the tyranny of their govern-*

ment will soon be destroyed.—Let every one of us be strongly impressed with this idea."

Such was the declaration of the sentiments of the Minister of the Marine; a declaration which separated not only the King, but the King and Parliament, from the people, who were called republicans. What faith could be put in assurances, given on the part of France by Chauvelin, on the 27th of December, when, in four days after, a member of the French government was found writing such a letter? It was highly proper, therefore, to reject such explanations as those which had been offered only to deceive. The state of the negotiation, then, appeared to be this,—the conduct of France was inconsistent with the peace and liberty of Europe; the French had given no satisfaction with respect to the question at issue; they had, indeed, offered what they called explanations,—but their principles, and the whole tenour of their conduct, were such, that no faith could be put in their declarations.—Their conduct gave the lie to their public professions; and, instead of giving satisfaction on the distinct articles, on which we had a right to claim a clear and precise explanation, and instead of shewing any desire to abandon those views of conquest and aggrandizement, to return within their ancient limits, and to set barriers to the progress of their destructive arms, and to their principles, still more destructive; instead of doing this, they had, by way of explanation, avowed their determination to persist in those practices which constituted the very ground of complaint.

If France was really desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, she must shew herself disposed to renounce her views of aggression and aggrandizement, and to confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, without disturbing their tranquillity, without violating their rights. Unless she consented to these terms, whatever might be the wishes of the British nation for peace, the final issue must be war.—But, as to the time, as to the moment when the war was to commence, if there were yet any possibility of satisfactory explanation, and security for the future, it was not to the last moment

precluded. Mr. Pitt said, however, that he should disguise his sentiments to the House, if he stated, that he thought an accommodation in any degree probable. The country had always been desirous of peace; it was so still, but of such a peace as might be real and solid, and consistent with the interests and dignity of Britain, and with the general security of Europe. War, whenever it came, would be preferable to peace without honour, without security, and incompatible either with the external safety, or internal happiness of the country.

Mr. Pitt, after he had fully developed his sentiments, on the important question at issue, moved an address, thanking his Majesty for his communication; offering him the heartfelt condolence of the House on the atrocious act lately perpetrated at Paris; expressing their sense of the aggressive and ambitious conduct of France; declaring their opinion of the necessity of a vigorous opposition to such conduct, and to the principles out of which it arose; and promising to make the necessary provision for a further augmentation of the national forces by sea and land.

The terms which Mr. Pitt here held out, as the condition of continued amity with France, were the same which were offered by Lord Grenville to Mr. Chauvelin, and were the only terms to which Great Britain could, with honour, or even with safety, accede. They involved nothing which could affect either the character or the interest of France;—nothing with which any regular government, any nation, uninfluenced by aggressive and ambitious views, incompatible with the peace and independence of other countries, could refuse to comply.—Mr. Pitt had, at length, become fully sensible of the dangerous tendency of the destructive principles adopted and propagated by the French revolutionary government, when combined with the means of aggression which that government possessed, and with the fixed resolution to employ them, avowed in their public acts, and manifested in their public conduct. It was strange, indeed, that a mind so acute as his, and so accustomed to follow causes to their consequences, should have been so long blind to the effects of such a comprehensive system of universal disorganization; which was not limited to one or two nations,

but included, within its spacious grasp, all civil and civilized society. Had he been fully sensible of these effects, at an earlier period of the Revolution; had he firmly resolved to check the growing spirit of mischief ere it had attained to its present state of maturity; and had he acted in concert with Russia and Prussia, when they first engaged in the contest, it is more than probable that he would have succeeded in the accomplishment of his end, with comparative facility. But it is by no means clear, that he would then have met with that support in Parliament, and in the country, which he now experienced. The minds of men were not then so alive to the danger which threatened Europe from the propagation of those vile principles; and it would have been infinitely more difficult to persuade them, that they were calculated to produce the effects which had now been *seen* to flow from them. Mr. Pitt, too, had a strong, and a very natural, bias in favour of peace. His plans of financial reform, his projects for the improvement of the revenue, and his scheme for the gradual reduction of the national debt, all required the continuance of peace to give them their full effect. His favourite objects thus tended to strengthen his pacific prepossessions, and to increase his disinclination to war. Nothing, then, but the fullest conviction of the formidable danger resulting from the conduct of the French government could have led him to propose, even now, those means of safety, and those preparations for resistance, which the situation of the country, and the state of Europe, so imperatively demanded. He was, indeed, forced, as it were, to enter upon a system at variance with all his views of internal policy; to divert his attention from those peaceful pursuits which were most congenial to his disposition, his habits, and his studies; and to appear on the political stage, in a new and untried character.

Some discussion took place on the address proposed by Mr. Pitt, in which Mr. Fox declared his opinion of the non-existence of any danger to this country, and strongly deprecated a war. He took this opportunity, also, of attacking certain principles advanced by Mr. Burke, in his Reflections on the French Revolution. He did not scruple to assert, that the *People were the Sovereigns* in every state, but he did not condescend to explain who, in that case, were the *subjects*, although, without *subjects*

there can be no *sovereigns;* he further maintained the revolutionary doctrine, that the people had a right to change the form of their government, and to cashier their governors for misconduct, as the people of this country had cashiered James the Second; *not by a Parliament, or any regular form known to the Constitution,* but by a convention, speaking the sense of the people;* that convention produced a Parliament and a King. They elected William to a vacant throne, not only setting aside James, whom they had justly cashiered for misconduct, but even his innocent son. Again, they elected the House of Brunswick, not individually, but by dynasty, and that dynasty to continue while the terms and conditions, on which it was elected, are fulfilled, and no longer. He could not admit the right to do all this but by acknowledging *the sovereignty of the people as paramount to all other laws.*†

Whatever might be the intentions of the speaker, this speech could not fail to encourage the seditious societies in England, to continue their efforts for the subversion of the constitution, and to express their wishes for the success of the French, since it justified the fundamental principle of the French Revolution, from which the practice of the French Rulers might easily be defended as a natural deduction. The facts, too, of the English Revolution were misrepresented, its nature and object perverted, and its leading principles artfully concealed. Mr. Windham answered Mr. Fox, contradicting his assertions respecting the sovereignty of the people;—after which the address was carried without a division.

The sincerity of Mr. Pitt's declarations of the wish of the British cabinet to preserve peace, was fully proved by his conduct, from the first dawn of the French Revolution to the present moment. From the middle of the year 1791, upon the first rumour of any measure taken by the Emperor of Germany, and till late in year 1792; not only

* Mr. Fox should here have confined himself to a statement of the mere fact, that James had been deposed (or declared to have abdicated the throne) by a convention; without adding that for which he had no authority,—that the convention *spoke the sense of the people.* The addition might be necessary to his argument, but it wanted the sanction of History.

† Debrett's Parliamentary Debates for 1793; p. 417, 418.

were the British Ministers no parties to any of the projects imputed to the Emperor, but, from the political circumstances, in which they then stood with relation to the Court of Vienna, they wholly declined all communication with him on the subject of France. To Prussia, who was the ally of Great Britain, and still more decisively to Holland, with whom the British government were in close and intimate correspondence, they uniformly stated their unalterable resolution to maintain neutrality, and to avoid interference in the internal affairs of France, so long as France should refrain from hostile measures against England and her allies. No Minister of England had any authority to treat with foreign states, even provisionally, for any warlike contest, till after the battle of Gemappe, which was fought on the 6th of November, 1792; till a period subsequent to the repeated provocations which had been offered to this country, and subsequent, particularly, to the disorganizing decree of the 19th of November. *

Even then Mr. Pitt laboured to devise the means for preventing a war. Mr. Maret (the present Secretary to Buonapartè) was, at this time, in England; and Mr. Pitt held a personal conference with him on the subject of the existing grounds of difference between the two countries. The particulars of this conference were communicated to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs by Mr. Maret, on the second of December, and his letter was afterwards published by the French government. By this document it appears, that Mr. Pitt gave the strongest assurances of his sincere desire to avoid a war, and explained the conditions on which it might be avoided, which conditions were similar to those which he explained to the House of Commons, and which were communicated, by Lord Grenville, to Chauvelin. He told Maret, that if the French government would authorize any person to treat with the British Ministers, they would find them disposed to listen to him, and to behave with cordiality and confidence. He requested Maret not to reject the only means of bringing them together, and of making them understand each other, when every question, proposed by the

* See Mr. Pitt's Speech on the 3d of February, 1800, in the collection of his Speeches, by Mr. Hathaway, Vol. IV.

French government, should be examined, and every proposition considered. He urged him not to lose a moment in sending to Paris for instructions, and to let him know the instant they arrived, when he would communicate with him on the subject. Mr. Maret, in his letter to the Minister, expresses his conviction of the sincerity of Mr. Pitt's pacific professions, and even says—" Mr. Pitt dreads war even more than the aristocracy of opposition." Talleyrand, the apostate Bishop of Autun, was in London at the same time, (in December, 1792) and informed the French government, that the British Ministry " had nothing more at heart than to treat for the preservation of their neutrality."

At this period, Russia had, at length, conceived, as well as the English government, a natural and a just alarm for the balance of Europe, and applied to our Ministers to learn their sentiments on the subject. In their answer to this application, the Ministers imparted to Russia the principles upon which they acted; and this answer was communicated to Prussia, between whom and this country a treaty of defensive alliance now subsisted. A dispatch was sent, from Lord Grenville, to the British Minister at St. Petersburgh, dated December the 29th, stating a desire to have an explanation set on foot on the subject of the war with France. It was here observed, that the two leading points on which the explanation would naturally turn, were, the line of conduct to be followed previous to the commencement of hostilities, and, *with a view, if possible, to avert them;* and the nature and amount of the forces which the powers engaged in this concert might be enabled to use, supposing such extremities unavoidable. With respect to the first, it appeared on the whole, subject, however, to future consideration and discussion with the other powers, that the most advisable step to be taken would be, that sufficient explanation should be had with the powers at war with France, in order to enable those not hitherto engaged in the war, to propose to that country terms of peace. That these terms should be, the withdrawing their armies within the limits of the French territory; the abandoning their conquests; the rescinding any acts injurious to the sovereignty or rights of any other nations; and the giving, in some public and unequivocal manner, a pledge of

their intention no longer to foment troubles, or to excite disturbances against other governments. In return for these stipulations, the different powers of Europe, who should be parties to this measure, might engage to abandon all measures or views of hostility against France, or interference in their internal affairs, and to maintain a correspondence, and intercourse of amity, with the existing powers in that country, with whom such a treaty might be concluded. If, in the result of this proposal so made, by the powers acting in concert, these terms should not be accepted by France, or, being accepted, should not be satisfactorily performed, the different powers might then engage themselves to each other, to enter into active measures, for the purpose of obtaining the ends in view; and it might be considered, whether, in such case, they might not rationally look to some indemnity for the expences and hazards to which they would necessarily be exposed.

It was not possible for any person, the most anxious to avoid hostilities, to conceive any measure to be adopted, in the actual situation of affairs, more strongly demonstrative of an earnest desire, after repeated provocations, to preserve peace, on any terms in the least degree consistent with national safety; nor could any sentiment be suggested more plainly and directly indicative of moderation, forbearance, and sincerity. Indeed, it is no longer a doubt, that this spirit of forbearance was carried much too far, and that an earlier display of that spirit of vigour and decision, manifested in open and determined hostility, which was alone adequate to meet and to repel the impending danger, would have been more wise, more politic, and more safe. Mr. Pitt himself acknowledged, at a subsequent period, with that candour which formed so prominent a feature in his character, that, at this time, he had not rightly cast the true character of the French Revolution, and he could not deny that he should have been better justified in a very different conduct. On that occasion, he confessed, adverting to this very time, that the ministers had been too slow in anticipating that danger of which they had, perhaps, even then, sufficient experience; and might have seen that nothing but vigorous and open hostility could afford complete and adequate security against

revolutionary principles, while they retained a portion of power sufficient to furnish the means of war.*

Nor did Mr. Pitt's efforts to avert a war stop even here.—Fully apprized of the resolution of the French government to invade Holland, at all events, the British Cabinet had transmitted the most positive instructions to Lord Auckland, our ambassador at the Hague, to render the Dutch sensible of the impending danger, and to induce them to adopt every requisite means of preparation and defence. In the accomplishment of this task, his Lordship was most zealously assisted by the Grand Pensionary, Von-Spieghel, a man of strict integrity, and of considerable talents. At this time, active negotiations were carried on between the Courts of St. James's, Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburgh, with a view to a general concert, in case every previous attempt to restore peace on the Continent, on a permanent footing, should prove abortive.—But *peace* was the primary object of every effort of the British Minister, as it was the first wish of his heart. M. de Maulde Hosdan, who had been a colonel in the French army, and who was a man of insinuating manners, and of no mean ability, was the French Minister at the Hague at this critical period; which residence he had left on the Second of January, 1793, to repair to Paris. General Dumouriez, having obtained leave of absence, from the army in the Netherlands, had also repaired to that capital. Two motives were assigned, as the objects of the General's journey.—First, to make a final arrangement with the Executive Council, for the execution of his plan for the invasion of Holland;—and, secondly, to exert his influence for the purpose of saving the life of his unfortunate Sovereign. It is highly probable that he had both these objects in view, though, in the accomplishment of one, his success was but partial, while, in that of the other, the failure was complete.

On the 27th of January, M. Joubert, M. de Maulde's Secretary, arrived at the Hague from Paris, and delivered a verbal message to Lord Auckland, purporting that General Dumouriez was gone to Ghent to re-

* Speech of February 3d, 1800.

sume the command of the army, and had given a letter to M. de Maulde, who would reach the Hague in a few hours, and wished to be received at the Ambassador's Hotel with as much secrecy as possible.—Accordingly, late in the evening, M. de Maulde arrived.—At this interview, Lord Auckland, very naturally, expressed his repugnance to engage in any conference or communication with the agents of an usurped government, stained with recent and complicated crimes of the worst description. But the explanations, afforded by M. de Maulde, respecting the sentiments and views of Dumouriez, were such as to induce his Lordship to receive the letter, which solicited an interview, either with his Lordship alone, or with his Lordship and M. Von Spieghel, and expressed a hope that the result would be favourable to England, to the United Provinces, to France, to Humanity, and to all Europe.* Immediately after the perusal of this letter, Lord Auckland sent a message to London, to refer its contents to his Majesty's Ministers, and to solicit instructions on a proposition of such serious importance.

There was every reason to believe, that Dumouriez was sincere in this overture, and that his intentions were pacific and honourable. The British Cabinet was animated by similar feelings; and, though Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville were not sanguine as to the result, they immediately transmitted to Lord Auckland the fullest instructions, and the fullest powers, for the proposed conference. At the same time, the preparations for war, both in England and in Holland, were redoubled, as it was much doubted whether Dumouriez could possess the means of carrying his intentions into effect, or of eventually doing any real good with such a government as that under which he acted.

So earnest, however, was the desire to adopt every expedient for the preservation of peace, that even the declaration of war, by the French Convention, on the first of February, against England and Holland, in consequence of a report made by Brissot, was not suffered to operate as an obstruction to the conference demanded by Dumouriez. On the eighth of February, Lord Auckland addressed a letter to that

* See Appendix C, for the original letter.

officer, for the purpose of settling the time and place of meeting, and of explaining the principles and views by which his Sovereign had been actuated in authorising his Lordship to confer with the General. It was truly observed, that the King had been influenced *by his unalterable love of peace*, by his humanity, by his desire to concert efficacious means, with the other powers of Europe, for the re-establishment of general tranquillity, on a solid, just, and satisfactory, foundation; by views of beneficence towards individuals, as well as by principles calculated to promote the happiness of all nations. His Lordship adverted to the aggressive acts of the French government, particularly the declaration of war, since the conference was first proposed, which would have fully justified him in adopting a different line of conduct, but declared that he should ever be ready to meet and to discuss any proposition which had for its object the good of the two countries. It was ultimately agreed that the interview between the British Ambassador, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, and the French Commander, should take place in the Mardyck, on board a yacht belonging to the Prince of Orange, which was in readiness for the purpose.—But, on the 14th of February, M. Joubert arrived at the Hague, with letters to Lord Auckland, dated the 12th, from M. de Maulde, informing his Lordship, that Dumouriez had received orders from the Convention, not to hold the proposed conference.—"*L'Entrevue n'aura pas lieu. Mon Souverain en ordonne autrement. Je ne puis que me resigner, et me taire.*" So little anxious were the regicides, who had usurped the reins of government, to preserve peace with the neighbouring powers.

Were any further evidence necessary to prove the pacific disposition of the British Minister, and the aggressive spirit of the French executive council, it might be collected from the repeated confessions of the respective leaders of the different revolutionary parties in France, each of whom, at different times, accused the others of being the authors of the war, not only against Great Britain and Holland, but against Austria and Prussia;—thus affording the strongest of all proofs, and the best possible testimony, that the war, on the part of England, was sanctioned by principles of justice, of necessity, and of self-preservation.

CHAPTER XXI.

Royal Message, communicating to Parliament the French declaration of war—Debates thereon —Mr. Pitt's Speech—His proofs of British neutrality and of French aggression—Established by authentic documents—Animadversions on the French Manifesto—Its falsehood demonstrated—Its various charges examined and confuted—The French Government guilty of the very acts with the commission of which they reproached the English Government—Mr. Pitt's arguments supported and confirmed by the authority of French writers—Efforts of the French Government to produce an artificial scarcity in England, and to create a Rebellion in this Country—Gold and silver purchased with assignats in England and exported to France—Mr. Pitt moves an address to the King, promising support—Mr. Fox objects to some parts of it—Insists that no specific demand of reparation had been urged by Ministers—Accuses Ministers of an eagerness for war—Moves an amendment—Mr. Fox's charges against Ministers shewn to be groundless—Chauvelin's dismissal justified from his boasted intimacy with the leaders of the British Opposition—Resolution of the French Regicides to exterminate all Monarchs, and to annihilate Monarchy—Mr. Dundas answers Mr. Fox; and proves that specific means for preventing a war had been suggested by the British Cabinet—Mr. Burke ridicules the notions of Mr. Fox—Amendment rejected, and Address carried, without a division—Debate on the same subject in the House of Lords—Lord Lauderdale's boasted friendship for Brissot truly characterized by Lord Loughborough —The Opposition seem to derive confidence from the diminution of their numbers—They resolve to harass the government by repeated motions for Peace—Mr. Fox moves a string of resolutions—His Speech in support of them—Censures Ministers and justifies France— —Memorial presented by Lord Auckland to the States-General of Holland—Reprobated by Mr. Fox—Misrepresentations of Mr. Fox corrected—Object and tendency of his resolutions, inferred from his past conduct, and from his known intimacy with M. Chauvelin—Mr. Burke affirms that all the sentiments in Mr. Fox's Speech had already appeared in the French papers as sentiments *that would be offered* to the House of Commons—His comments on Mr. Fox's constant defence of the French Government—Marks the base ingratitude of Chauvelin—Mr. Fox's resolutions rejected by a majority of two hundred and seventy-four—Mr. Grey moves resolutions similar to those of Mr. Fox—They are rejected without a division, and without a debate—Discussions on the proposal for the erection of Barracks—The system censured by Mr. Taylor and Mr. Fox—Defended by Mr. Pitt—Proofs of attempts to seduce the Army from their duty—Mr. Dundas's statement of Indian affairs—Prosperity of that Country—Mr. Sheridan's motion for an inquiry into the existence of seditious practices—Opposed by Mr. Windham—Mr. Fox avows his disbelief of plots and conspiracies—Is answered by Mr. Burke—Motion negatived without a division—Mr. Pitt

opens the Budget—Ways and Means—The House concurs in his proposed resolutions—Bill for preventing traitorous correspondence brought in by the Attorney-General—Objects of the Bill—Attacked by Mr. Fox—Supported by Mr. Martin, Mr. Frederick North, and Mr. Burke—Bill carried by a great majority—Discussed in the House of Lords—Opposed by the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and the Earls of Guildford, Lauderdale, and Stanhope—Passes into a Law.

[1793.] The declaration of war, issued by the French government against England and Holland, was formally communicated to Parliament. The two Houses were informed that the persons then exercising the powers of government in France, had, without previous notice, and on the most groundless pretences, directed acts of hostility to be committed against this country and the United Provinces; that, under the circumstances of this wanton and unprovoked aggression, his Majesty had taken the necessary steps to maintain the honour of the Crown, and to vindicate the rights of his people; that he relied, with confidence, on the firm and effectual support of Parliament, and on the zealous exertions of a brave and loyal people, in prosecuting a just and necessary war, and in endeavouring, under the blessing of Providence, to oppose an effectual barrier to the further progress of a system which struck at the security and peace of all independent nations, and was pursued in open defiance of every principle of moderation, good faith, humanity, and justice. His Majesty stated, in this message, that he had every reason to hope, in a cause of such general concern, for the cordial co-operation of those powers who were united with him by the ties of alliance, or who felt an interest in preventing the extension of anarchy and confusion, and in contributing to the security and tranquillity of Europe.

The royal message was taken into consideration by the House of Commons, on the 12th of February, when Mr. Pitt enlarged on the topics which had been discussed in the late debate, and entered into further proofs of the aggressive and dangerous conduct of the French government. It was no longer, he contended, a subject of speculation or opinion, whether, and on what terms, we should secure the continuance of an unsafe and precarious peace.—War had been declared against us, and was carried on at our very doors;—a war which aimed

at an object of no less magnitude than the destruction of the freedom and independence of the country; nothing, therefore, was left but to oppose the efforts of our enemies, with adequate vigour and effect. He again proved, that his Majesty had observed the strictest and most inviolable neutrality towards France; and that, in return, the French rulers had expressly engaged to respect the rights of his Majesty, and of his allies,—not to interfere in the government of any neutral country, —and not to pursue any system of aggrandizement, or make any addition to their dominions,—but to confine themselves, at the conclusion of the war, within their own territories. All these conditions they had grossly violated, and had adopted an ambitious and destructive system of policy, fatal to the peace and security of every government; and which, in its consequences, had shaken Europe itself to its foundation. Their decree of the 19th of November, which had been so much discussed, offering fraternity and assistance to all people who wished to recover their liberty, was a decree not levelled against particular nations, but against every country where there was any form of government established;—a decree not hostile to individuals, but to the human race; which was calculated every where to sow the seeds of rebellion and civil contention, and to spread war from one end of Europe to the other,—from one end of the Globe to the other.—So far from exempting England from the operation of this decree, it might be supposed that it was its particular object,* if an opinion were to be

* So true is it that there was no intention to exempt England from the operation of this outrageous decree, that, after the complaints of the British government respecting it were known in France, a motion made in the Convention, on the 24th of December by M. BARAILLON, for the purpose of limiting its application to Powers with whom the French were actually at war, was rejected without a division. The following brief account of this attempt is extracted from the Moniteur, of Dec. 25, 1792. "*Baraillon.*—" This decree has " already made us many enemies;—and the number will still be increased. The English " Ministry have testified their discontent to our government, who have been forced to give the " most favourable interpretation to the decree. I move that in the decree of Nov. 19th, after " these words, ' The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that " ' they will grant fraternity and assistance to all people,' the following words be added, " ' Against those tyrants with whom they shall be at war.' "

" The previous question was moved on this amendment. It was decreed that *there was no* " *ground for deliberation.*"

formed from the exultation with which the French Rulers had received, from different societies in England, every address expressive of sedition and disloyalty, and from the eager desire which they had testified to encourage and cherish the growth of such sentiments. Not only had they shewn no inclination to fulfil their engagements, but they had even put it out of their own power, by taking the first opportunity to make additions to their territory in contradiction to their own direct stipulations. By express resolutions for the destruction of the existing government of all invaded countries, by the means of jacobin societies, by orders given to their generals, by the whole system adopted in this respect by the National Convention, and by the actual annexation of the whole country of Savoy, they had marked their determination to enlarge the dominions of France, and to provide means, by new conquests, to extend their principles over the whole of Europe. Their conduct was such as, in every instance, militated against the dearest and most valuable interests of this country.

Mr. Pitt then specified all the means and precautions which had been adopted by the Ministers for preventing a war:* these, indeed, were but too evident, and it is needless to repeat them. In spite of these war had been declared by the French, and an embargo had been laid upon all the vessels and persons of his Majesty's subjects, without any previous notice, contrary to treaty, and against all the laws of nations.—Yet, it was after this outrageous act, that Lord Auckland had been authorized to confer with Dumouriez on the terms of accommodation. He now proceeded to animadvert on the French Manifesto, which contained the reasons, or rather the pretexts, for the declaration of war: it began with declaring, "That the King of England had not ceased, especially since the Revolution of the 10th of August, 1792, to give proofs of his being evil-disposed towards the

* Both Dumouriez, in his Memoirs, and Brissot, in his memorable letter to his constituents, do justice to the pacific intentions of the British Minister; the former expressly says, that *war might easily have been avoided* by the French government; and the latter, though the author of the declaration of war, ascribes all the disastrous events, which he affected to deplore, after he had actively contributed to promote them, to the impolicy of provoking a war with England.

French nation, and of his attachment to the coalition of crowned heads!" No attempt was made to support this assertion, by shewing any acts of hostility previous to the 10th of August; nor was any fact adduced to prove the alleged attachment to the coalition, except the King's supposed accession to the treaty between the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia. But there was no truth whatever in the supposition; it was utterly destitute of foundation; no accession having ever taken place, on the part of his Majesty, to any such treaty.

The next charge was, "That at the period aforesaid, he ordered his ambassador, at Paris, to withdraw, because he would not acknowledge the provisional Executive Council, created by the Legislative Assembly." As the ambassador was accredited to the King only, when the King was deposed, and the atrocities of the 10th of August, and those of the 2d of September had occurred, it became necessary to recal him; his recal, too, at the time, had not been made a subject of complaint. It was then urged, "That the cabinet of St. James's had ceased, since the same period, to correspond with the French ambassador at London, on pretext of the suspension of the heretofore King of the French. That, since the opening of the National Convention, it had refused to resume the usual correspondence between the two States, and to acknowledge the powers of this Convention. That it had refused to acknowledge the ambassador of the French Republic, although provided with letters of credence in its name." Chauvelin had been received as the ambassador of Louis the XVI.; and when that Monarch was deposed, the powers of his ambassador ceased, of course. The letters of credence from the usurpers of the legal authority were not presented till the seventeenth of January; after the revolutionary decree of November had been passed, after the preliminary steps for the murder of the King had been adopted, after repeated instances of aggression and offence had occurred;—it was impossible, therefore, to receive them, and thereby to acknowledge the Convention, whose assumed authority was thus cruelly and unjustly exercised against the power which they had usurped.

Having expatiated at some length upon these points, he proceeded

to examine the validity of the next charges, of forbidding the exportation of grain, and other commodities, to France, * and obstructing the commercial operations of the Republic in England, by prohibiting the circulation of assignats; † of subjecting French citizens to vexatious

* The bills for prohibiting the exportation of corn, and of arms, to France, were brought into the British Parliament in the month of December; the obvious necessity of such a prohibition, after the hostile disposition of the French had been so fully, and so repeatedly, manifested, renders all argument in defence of it superfluous. France herself had passed a decree for prohibiting the exportation of arms and ammunition, on the third of November, 1791; and England was not so weak, or so querulous, as to make it a subject of complaint. The bill for prohibiting the exportation of corn, which Chauvelin had the assurance to call "An act of perfidy," had been rendered indispensably necessary, by the more than suspicious conduct of the French government. For, although there was plenty of wheat in France, at that period, the Minister for the Home Department, as appears by a report from the Committee of Subsistence, on November 29th, 1792, and inserted in the *Moniteur* of the first of December following, purchased corn, at the beginning of December, in England, at a much higher price than it sold for in the French market. In the sitting of the Convention, of the 6th of December, Marat reproached the Minister with this fact, and declared, that a respectable citizen had offered to procure any quantity of corn at *twenty-seven livres* the *septier*, while he was paying at the rate of *fifty-four livres* for it in the English ports. This fact is stated in the *Moniteur* of the 8th of December. It was therefore perfectly clear that, in this conduct, the French government had some sinister views; and, as an *artificial scarcity* had been one of the principal revolutionary instruments, in the early periods of the Revolution, it is not too much to suppose, that the intention was to produce similar effects in this country by the creation of a real scarcity. Brissot, indeed, says, in his letter to his constituents, that "We might have cut off the means of subsistence from our enemies, by harassing their commerce, and *have excited internal commotions by the scarcity and dearness of provisions*."

† The bill for prohibiting the circulation of *assignats*, in England, was brought into the House of Commons by the Attorney-General, on the 26th of December, and passed both Houses in a few days, with little opposition. This bill, the object of which was to forbid both the payment and the tender of French assignats, was equally necessary with the other measures of precaution and safety, adopted by the British government, at this critical period.—For, besides the immense loss which must have been sustained by individuals, from the circulation of revolutionary instruments of fraud; it would have afforded the National Convention the means of paying its agents in this country, and of promoting the popular insurrection, on the effect of which they placed the strongest reliance.—While Cambon had the direction of the Committee of Finance, assignats, to no less amount than three thousand millions of livres, were paid (according to Brissot) in eighteen months.—No inconsiderable quantity was transmitted to England, in November and December, 1792; and there is the authority of Brissot for asserting, that Cambon bought in England, with assignats, specie

restrictions, by the Alien Act; of granting pecuniary aid to the *rebels*, and of receiving the rebel chiefs from the West Indies. All these had been stated as provocations. That we had, indeed, taken measures, which, if viewed by themselves, and not as connected with the situation of affairs in which they were adopted, might possibly be considered in the light of provocations, was certain; but if those measures were justified by the necessity of circumstances, if they were called for by a regard to our own safety and interests, they could only be regarded as temperate and moderate precautions. And, in this point of view, these grounds, assigned in the declaration, could only be considered as frivolous and unfounded pretences. The charge respecting the exportation of grain was ridiculous; when there was reason to apprehend that France intended an attack upon the allies of this country, and against the country itself, was it natural to suppose that the English should furnish, from their own bosom, supplies to be turned against themselves and their allies? Could they be such children in understanding, could they be such traitors in principle, as to furnish to their enemies the means of hostility, and the instruments of offence? As to the prohibition of assignats, the French truly had reason to be offended that we would not receive what was worth nothing;—and that, by exercising an act which came completely within our own sovereignty, with

to the amount of twenty-five millions of livres, or about a million and fifty thousand pounds sterling.—This sum was never accounted for, and there is every reason to believe that it was employed for the purpose of gaining partisans to France, with a view to promote a rebellion in England.* To this Brissot unquestionably refers, in the following passage of his letter to his constituents:—"These republicans have never ceased to assert, that, if we expect to "succeed, we must have *money for secret expences*, partly for the purpose of dividing the "cabinet, and partly for the purpose *of exciting the people against their tyrants*. We want "it for the North, we want it for the South, we want it for the Indies."—P. 74. Again,—"It was Cambon and Barrere, who caused the decree to be made, by which the Executive "Council was authorized to take, under the head of army-extraordinaries, *unlimited sums for* "*secret operations*." By passing this salutary bill, then, the Minister deprived the French government of one of the most powerful instruments for effecting the destruction of the English Constitution.

* Mr. Chalmers, in his valuable estimate of the comparative strength of Great Britain, proves that, in the year 1792, two millions nine hundred thousand ounces of silver were purchased in this country, with assignats, and sent to France.

respect to the circulation of any foreign paper-currency, we avoided a gigantic system of swindling! If such, indeed, were the pretences which they brought forward as grounds for a declaration of war, it was matter of wonder that, instead of a sheet of paper, they did not occupy a volume; but they had proved, that their ingenuity had been exhausted before their modesty was at all affected. As to the effects of the Alien-bill, it was a measure of national safety, as it shielded us from the artifice of the seditious, and, perhaps, from the dagger of the assassin; and it ill became them to complain of it, who had adopted restrictions of police ten times more severe, but of which our government, however much its subjects might be affected by them, had never made the smallest complaint. *

The Executive Council proceeded to state, "That in the same spirit, without any provocation, and when all the maritime powers were at peace with England, the Cabinet of St. James's had ordered a considerable naval armament,† and an augmentation of the land

* It has already been observed, that a measure of similar import to the Alien-bill, but more severe in its provisions and effects, had been passed in France, on the 18th of May, 1792. The decree here alluded to, ordained, besides the oppressive restrictions before noticed, that every foreigner who should neglect to make the required declaration of his name, &c. should be fined an hundred livres, and subject to imprisonment for any term not exceeding three months; and that, whoever made a false declaration, should forfeit a thousand livres, and be imprisoned for any term not exceeding six months. Every Englishman who travelled in France, at that time, was obliged, before he could move from place to place, to provide himself with a passport, containing as exact a description of his age and person, as an advertisement for the apprehension of a thief. So strict was the examination of passports, on the different roads, that Lord Gower, when he returned from Paris, in August 1792, was stopped more than once on his way, and detained till messengers had been sent to Paris, and returned with orders for his liberation. No complaints were made by the English government, of this decree, which was a violation of the fourth article of the commercial treaty, because the French Assembly declared it to be necessary for the preservation of internal tranquillity. At this time, too, it should be observed, the British government had, in no instance, deviated from the strictest neutrality; whereas, when the Alien-bill was introduced in the British Parliament, the National Convention had publicly declared its readiness to assist in the subversion of the British Constitution. These facts suffice to shew the extreme frivolity and injustice of the complaint preferred, on this account, by Mr. Le Brun.

† This naval armament, which now appeared so formidable to Mr. Le Brun, did not equal the number of ships which the French themselves had in commission. It has been seen, that

forces.—That this armament was ordered at a moment when the English Minister was bitterly persecuting those who supported the principles of the French Revolution in England, and was employing all possible means, both in Parliament and out of it, to cover the French Republic with ignominy, and to draw upon it the execration of the English nation and all Europe."

This armament had taken place at the period when the French, by forcibly opening the navigation of the Scheldt, had shewn their intention to disregard the obligations of all treaties. When they had begun to propagate principles of universal war, and to discover views of

only nine thousand seamen and marines, in addition to the sixteen thousand, the complement of the peace-establishment, had been voted on the 20th of December; and no further addition was made till after the declaration of war by the French. These would not man more than eighteen sail of the line, with the proportionate number of smaller vessels; whereas it appears, from the report of the Minister of the Marine, on September 3d, 1792, that, even then, the French government had twenty-one sail of the line, thirty frigates, eighteen sloops, four-and-twenty cutters, and ten ships armed en flute, actually at sea; indeed, Brissot himself says, in his letter to his constituents, "England did not begin to arm *till three months* "*after us.*" But there cannot be a better proof that the charge, respecting the armament, was nothing more than a miserable pretext, than the statement of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his report to the Convention, on the 19th of December (inserted in the Moniteur of the 21st): "*There is nothing in these armaments which ought to alarm us*, since "they exceed only, by four sail of the line, the number in commission in the preceding "years; since, of the sixteen ships now in commission, at least ten are guard-ships, the "oldest and the least serviceable vessels in the English navy; and, lastly, since the King has "declared, that these armaments would require no additional taxes." And, on the 31st of the same month, when the British navy was increased, the same Minister acknowledged, that France had not much reason to be alarmed. Even on the 12th of January, 1793, Brissot considered the additional armament in England as exhibiting no serious demonstration of a warlike intention, and as not exceeding the pretended armaments on former occasions, against Russia and against Spain; indeed, at that period, the French navy was more considerable than the British, the former having actually in commission, on the 13th of January, 1793, *fifty-four sail of the line*, whereas the latter had only *forty-five*, including those in commission, and, indeed, those only ordered to be put in commission. The truth then is, that all the acts of aggression were imputable, exclusively, to France, who had begun to increase her naval armaments, at a time when she acknowledged that the strictest neutrality had uniformly marked the conduct of England; whereas England did not begin to arm until she had the most positive proofs of the hostile intentions of France. As to the land force, the whole amount of it in Great Britain, in December 1792, was only 15,700 men; and not more than 1600 were added to it, previous to the declaration of war.

unbounded conquests, was it to be wondered at, that at such a time, we should think it necessary to take measures of precaution, and to oppose with determination, the progress of principles, not only of so mischievous a tendency, but which, in their immediate consequences, threatened to be so fatal to ourselves and to our allies? If they meant to attack us because we did not like French principles, then would this, indeed, be that sort of war which had so often been alleged and deprecated by the opposition—a war against opinions.—If they meant to attack us because we loved our Constitution, then would it indeed be a war of extirpation; for, not till the spirit of Englishmen was exterminated, would their attachment to the Constitution be destroyed, and their generous efforts be slackened in its defence.

The French declaration then went on thus: "That the object of this armament, intended against France, was not even disguised in the English Parliament.

"That although the Provisional Executive Council of France had employed every measure for preserving peace and fraternity with the English nation, and had replied to calumnies and violations of treaties only by remonstrances, founded on the principles of justice, and expressed with the dignity of freemen, the English Minister has persevered in his system of malevolence and hostility, continued the armaments, and sent a squadron to the Scheldt to disturb the operations of the French in Belgium. That, on the news of the execution of Louis, he carried his outrages to the French Republic to such a length, as to order the ambassador of France to quit the British territory within eight days.

"That the King of England had manifested his attachment to the cause of *that traitor*, and his design of supporting it by different hostile resolutions adopted in his council, both by nominating generals of his land army, and by applying to Parliament for a considerable addition of land and sea forces, and putting ships of war in commission."

The French government clearly shewed their enmity to the British

constitution, by taking every opportunity to separate the King of England from the nation, and by addressing the people as distinct from the government.—Upon the point of their fraternity, Mr. Pitt did not wish to say much; he had no desire for their affection.—Indeed, their fraternity was the greatest curse that could be inflicted on any people;—it went to deprive them of every means of subsistence, and to rob them of every consolation both here and hereafter. To the people of England they offered fraternity, while they would wrest from them that constitution by which they were protected, and deprive them of the numerous blessings which they enjoyed under its influence.—In that case, their fraternal embraces resembled those of certain animals, who embraced only to destroy.

The grief which had been manifested by the British Court at the murder of Louis the Sixteenth, was, of all the reasons which had ever been urged for making war against another country, the most extraordinary;—they said they would make war on us, first, because we loved our constitution; secondly, because we detested their proceedings; and, lastly, because we presumed to grieve at the death of their murdered King. Thus would they even destroy those principles of justice, and those sentiments of compassion, which led us to reprobate their crimes, and to be afflicted at their cruelties.—Thus would they deprive us of the last resource of humanity,—to mourn over the misfortunes and sufferings of the victims of their injustice. If such were the case, it might be asked, in the emphatic words of the Roman writer, *Quis gemitus Populo Romano libererit?* They would not only endeavour to destroy our political existence, and to deprive us of the privileges which we enjoyed under our excellent constitution; but they would eradicate our feelings as men; they would make crimes of those sympathies which were excited by the distresses of our common nature; they would repress our sighs, and restrain our tears.—Thus, except the specific fact, which was alleged as a ground of their declaration of war, namely, the accession of his Majesty to the treaty between Austria and Prussia, which was entirely false and unfounded, or the augmentation of our armament, a measure of precaution indispensably requisite for the safety of the country, and the protection of its allies,

all the others were merely unjust, unfounded, absurd, and frivolous, pretexts—pretexts which never could have been brought to justify a measure of which they were not, previously, strongly desirous, and which shewed that, instead of waiting for provocation, they only sought a pretence for aggression.—The death of Louis, though it only affected the individual, was aimed at all sovereignty, and shewed their determination to carry into execution that intention, which they had so often professed, of exterminating all monarchy.*

* The records of the debates of the French Legislative Assembly, and of the National Convention, the writings of public characters, and the manifestoes of the government, both previous and subsequent to the present period, all combine to supply a multiplicity of irrefragable proofs of the truth of this assertion. Brissot frequently confessed that "*the universal revolution of mankind*" was the object of himself and his associates in dethroning the King of France. "*Before the tenth of August*, they wished for liberty, *not only for their own country, but* FOR ALL EUROPE!" Of course they wished for the extermination of all monarchy, and for the establishment of an universal Republic. Publicola Chaussard, who was employed by the Executive Council, at the close of the year 1792, to carry their decrees of November 19th, and December 15th, into effect in the Austrian Netherlands, and who received their particular instructions for the application of those decrees, declared their object in unequivocal terms:—"A WAR, AD INTERNECIONEM, *is declared between the Republic and monarchies.*—Austria being once subdued, the Germanic body may become a colossus of federative republics, and change the system of the North." The President of the Convention himself, in answer to an address from the sections of Paris, plainly told them, "This is *a war, to last till death*, between *republicans* and KINGS."—Robespierre avowed the object of the war to be "*The Revolution of Europe.*"—Camille Desmoulins, in his history of the Brissotins, affirms, what he calls "the *sublime* vocation of the Convention," to have been "to create the French Republic" (although, be it observed, they had solemnly sworn to support the *monarchical* constitution), "*to disorganize Europe*; perhaps *to purge it of its tyrants*, by the eruption of the volcanic principles of *equality*." But the most decisive of all these testimonies, is the evidence of the Executive Council themselves, who, in their instructions to their Commissioner, Chaussard, on the application of those very decrees which they represented as perfectly innocuous, observe, that peace cannot be obtained "BUT BY THE ANNIHILATION OF THE DESPOTS AND THEIR SATELLITES." Kings were publicly stigmatized as banditti, in the National Convention.—"All *Kings*," said Barbaroux, on the 8th of December 1792, "only fight the people like a banditti."—And every effort was used, as well by the National Convention as by the Jacobin Club, which partook of their power, and, not unfrequently, dictated their decisions, to inspire the people with an implacable hatred of kings, and with a ferocious desire to exterminate them from the face of the earth. On the fourth of September, the whole National Assembly, without a single exception, *swore hatred to Kings and to Royalty*, on the motion of Chabot, the monk, (Grand Vicar to the Abbè Gregoire,) one of the most notorious criminals which the Revolution engendered, who, ulti-

In conclusion, Mr. Pitt remarked, that we had, in every instance, observed the strictest neutrality, with respect to the French;—we had pushed, to its utmost extent, the system of temperance and moderation; we had holden out the means of accommodation; we had waited till the last moment for satisfactory explanation. The means we had offered had been slighted and abused; and not the smallest disposition had been evinced to afford the explanation required. They had, at last, proceeded to direct acts of hostility, by seizing our vessels in our very ports, without any provocation on our part; and they had declared, and were now waging, war, without any other preparation by us, than those of necessary precaution. Such was the conduct which they had pursued, —such was the situation in which we stood. It now remained to be seen whether, under Providence, the efforts of a free, brave, loyal, and happy people, aided by their allies, would not be successful in checking the progress of a system, the principles of which, if not opposed, threatened

mately, met his well-merited fate at the guillotine, after an ineffectual endeavour to poison himself.—This man offered himself as a volunteer in the corps of twelve hundred Regicides, which Jean de Brie, soon after, proposed to the Convention to establish. On the 28th of November, the Abbè Gregoire, who was then President of the Convention, said, in answer to an address from one of the seditious clubs in England, "*Principles* are waging war *against Royalty*, which will fall under the blows of Philosophy. Royalty, in Europe, is either destroyed, or in the last agony, perishing on the ruins of the feudal system; and the declaration of rights, placed by the side of thrones, is a devouring fire, which will soon consume them. Estimable republicans, console yourselves with the reflection, that the festival which you have celebrated in honour of the French Revolution, *is the prelude to the festival of nations.*"

Remi, a member of the Convention, conjured his brethren, on the second of December, to "*teach the people to punish their tyrants in a manner worthy of themselves;*" and, on the fourth of that month, the noted Carra told the Convention—"You know that the stroke, by which the head of Louis is about to fall, *will make the heads of the other despots totter.*" —In the same spirit, Carra, in his speech of the second of January, said—"Let the head of Louis fall; and *George the Third, with his Minister, Pitt, will feel if their heads are still on their shoulders.—The same fate will attend the other despots;* and shortly will every people exclaim, 'The head of our tyrant is not more divine than that of Louis; let us strike it off, therefore; let us abolish royalty; let us imitate the French in every thing; and cries of, Vive la Liberté! Vive l'Egalité! Vive la Republique! shall resound throughout Europe."

After this notable exhortation to murder, *for the sake of the example*, and only two days before the declaration of war, Danton said, in the Convention, "You have thrown down the gauntlet to Kings;—this gauntlet is the head of a King;—*it is the signal of their approaching death.*"

the most fatal consequences to the tranquillity of the country, the security of its allies, the good order of every European government, and the happiness of the whole human race.

The address moved by Mr. Pitt, repeating, as usual, the sentiments contained in the message, was seconded by Mr. Powis. Mr. Fox objected to some parts of it;—he contended, that no supposed insult or aggression could supply a just ground of war, unless satisfaction had been specifically demanded and refused. He allowed the decree of the 19th of November entitled the country to require an explanation; but he contended, that no explanation, sufficiently clear, specific and definite, had been demanded.—He insisted that, from the very first, we had never discovered any sincere desire to negotiate.—And he considered the recal of our ambassador from Paris, and the dismissal of Chauvelin, as sufficient proofs of the justice of this assertion. He reproached ministers as acting like men afraid of seeking complete satisfaction, lest it should be granted; of stating the specific causes of complaint, lest they should lose their pretext for war. It was a natural deduction from these false premises, that the war was imputable to the mismanagement of ministers; and, therefore, he could not support that part of the address which represented it as an unprovoked aggression on the part of France. He was persuaded that the dismission of Chauvelin, and the prohibition of the exportation of corn to that country, when it was allowed to others, were acts of provocation and hostility on our part. In pursuance of these sentiments, Mr. Fox moved an amendment to the address, expressing the concern of the House, that the Assembly, who now exercised the powers of government in France, had directed the commission of hostility against the persons and property of his Majesty's subjects, and that they had since actually declared war against his Majesty and the United Provinces; then, pledging the support of the House, in repelling every hostile attempt against this country, and in such other exertions as might be necessary to induce France to consent to such terms of pacification as might be consistent with the honour of his Majesty's Crown, the security of his allies, and the interests of his people.

The insufficiency of the reasons assigned by Mr. Fox for throwing the blame of the war on the British Ministers, has been already demonstrated in the course of this discussion.—But it is fortunate for the historian, that a document exists to prove that the dismission of Chauvelin could not be considered by the French government, notwithstanding their public declarations, as an act of aggression on our part, since they had themselves actually issued orders for his recal, *before* Lord Grenville's order was sent to Chauvelin, to leave the kingdom. This last order was dated the *twenty-fourth* of January; and in a letter, written by Dumouriez to Miranda, dated Paris, January the *twenty-third*, it is expressly stated, that orders had been already given to Chauvelin to return.—" *On a donné ordre à notre ambassadeur Chauvelin de revenir.*"* It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the war could not have been occasioned by the conduct of our Ministers, in the dismission of Chauvelin. It was still in the power of the French government to continue the negotiations, through any other channel; and, indeed, it is evident, from the conversation between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Maret, before adverted to, that the British Minister was most anxious for the preservation of peace, and that his anxiety betrayed him into a species of condescension scarcely compatible with the dignity of his situation, and led him even to *court*, and to *solicit*, the proposal of such means, on the part of France, for the prevention of a war, as he could accede to, consistently with his duty, and without compromising the honour and the security of the country.

But, independently of these prominent and commanding motives (already detailed), which rendered necesary the dismissal of a man, who had been accredited by a Monarch, now recently murdered, and who had, without a scruple, transferred his allegiance and his services to the assassins of his lawful Sovereign; there were subordinate motives, arising out of the personal character and conduct of the individual, alone sufficient to justify the act.—Mr. Chauvelin had entered into that spirit of political proselytism, by the aid of which his new masters had succeeded in bringing their own Sovereign to the scaffold, and in

* Correspondence du General Miranda, p. 15.

placing the reins of government in the hands of his murderers, with all the alacrity and zeal of a new convert. In pursuance of those orders, which had been transmitted to all agents and emissaries of Republican France, accredited and unaccredited, he had made some efforts toward's the execution of Le Brun's audacious threat, *to appeal from the King to the people.** He had, indeed, after it was apparent that his Sovereign was a mere cypher in the State, and must speedily be dethroned, entered fully into the views of the republican faction. The tone of his official communications, and his irregular conduct, in seeking to address the Parliament, in a most unprecedented manner, and in violation both of the principles and of the forms of the British Constitution, all betrayed his ardent attachment to the new order of things, and his earnest wish to promote, as far as in him lay, the same divisions in this country which had tended, so materially, in France, to produce the total destruction of the political and social edifice. He had early entered into a kind of confidential intercourse with the leaders of opposition in England, which was totally incompatible with the duty of a foreign Minister; and that connection continued to become more intimate and close until his final dismission. It appears, by a letter from Chauvelin to Chambonas, of the 17th of July, 1792, that he was in the

* Le Brun, who was a member of the Executive Council, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his report to the Convention, of the 19th of December, 1792, affirmed, that express orders had been given to Chauvelin, "to embrace every opportunity of assuring the English *nation*, "that (notwithstanding the ill-humour of its *government*) the French people desired nothing "more ardently, than to merit *its* esteem;" and Le Brun added, that if the naval armament (which, at the same time, he admitted ought not to occasion any alarm) should be continued, "*we would not fail to make a solemn appeal to the English nation.*"

Mr. Chauvelin's letter to Lord Grenville, of the 27th of December, contains a pointed allusion to the threatened appeal of Le Brun. This insolent republican there cautions the British Ministers "to consider the terrible responsibility of a declaration of war," (which had been previously resolved on by his own government,) "which would incontestably be "their work; the consequences of which must be fatal to both countries, and to all man-"kind; and *in which a generous and free people could not long consent to betray their own inte-"rests, by acting as auxiliaries, and reinforcements, to a tyrannical coalition.*" The consequences of the war could not possibly be *fatal to all mankind*, unless it was the determination of France to make it a general war; and, indeed, Mr. Chauvelin's unguarded assertion could be founded only on his knowledge of the intentions of his new masters (as afterwards avowed by one of them, *Brissot*) to *revolutionize all Europe*, by *setting fire to its four corners.*

habit of asking and of receiving the opinions of the opposition, on the conduct and intentions of Ministers;* and when he was recalled, after the Revolution of the tenth of August, he made a merit of this intercourse with the rebels, who deemed it of sufficient consequence to justify a revocation of their order of recal.—In his letter, on this occasion, he observed, "*that though he did not stand well with the English* "*Minister, yet he stood perfectly well with* MR. FOX *and some other* "*members of opposition, and that* IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT IN "FRANCE TO LOSE THE FRUITS OF HIS LABOURS WITH THOSE GEN- "TLEMEN, AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT SERVICES, *for a vain form of* "*diplomatic etiquette.*"† And, to such a length was this strange confidential intercourse carried, that, before the negotiation opened with the British Cabinet, he even communicated his secret instructions (in which it was positively stated, that the right of opening the Scheldt would not be abandoned, and that an acknowledgement of the French Republic would, nevertheless, be insisted on) to an intimate friend of Mr. Fox.‡ There can be no doubt, from the instructions and correspondence of Chauvelin, from all the circumstances of his case, and from the whole tenour of his conduct, that he was kept so long in London for the sole purpose of placing himself at the head of an insurrection, which he was directed to promote, and of the speedy occurrence of which his employers entertained the fullest conviction. The only blame, then, which seems to attach to the British Ministers, for their conduct to this man, was for suffering him to remain in England after the Sovereign whom, alone, he represented had been

* This letter, which may be seen in the *Moniteur* of July 29th, 1792, related to some alarms conceived by certain Frenchmen, lately arrived from the Continent, relative to a small squadron of five sail of the line, which sailed from Portsmouth merely to perform naval evolutions in the channel. Chauvelin tells his government that there was no ground for such alarm; that his sentiments, on the subject, were the same as those of the English, "even of "those who are the most jealous of the operations of government. *They have all been, and still are of opinion,* that the armament has no other object, than to exercise the English sailors in certain evolutions." He admitted, at this time, that these Frenchmen entertained "*certain false notions of the disposition of the English government.*"

† See this letter in the Authentic Correspondence with Le Brun and others, published by Mr. Miles. Appendix, p. 83.

‡ Idem. Ibid. p. 84.

dethroned, and after his language and his actions had manifested his unwarrantable designs.

Mr. Fox's amendment was opposed by Mr. Dundas, who, in answer to the assertion that no specific means of preventing a war had been suggested by the Ministers, referred the House to the letter of Lord Grenville to Chauvelin, in which his Lordship expressly stated, that, in order to secure the continuance of amity, France should renounce all views of aggrandizement, confine herself within her own territories, and desist from violating the rights of other nations. These certainly were distinct and specific terms, which were so intelligible and plain as to admit of neither misconception nor mistake.

Mr. Burke, too, opposed Mr. Fox's idea of the necessity of stating the specific object of war, previous to its commencement, declaring that he never heard, or read, of such a political maxim, either in theory or in practice. The first question to be considered, in such cases, was, whether there existed just grounds for a war; and the second, how it was to be carried on with the greatest effect. — Previously to declare the means by which it was to be carried on, or to fix the precise period of its termination, was not only not consonant to general usage, but contrary to the accustomed policy of all nations. The French had made no such declaration; and it would be highly impolitic and unwise in us, to cramp our operations, by any such unnecessary statement of our object.—The amendment was rejected and the address carried, without a division.

In the discussion of the same subject in the House of Lords, a similar amendment to that moved by Mr. Fox, was proposed by Lord Lauderdale, and experienced the same fate.—In the debate on the King's first message, this nobleman took an opportunity of stating, that he was proud to rank Brissot* among the list of his friends, for his

* Lord Lauderdale, on this occasion, quoted the sentiments of Brissot, to prove the *pacific disposition* of the French government, little thinking that, in a very short time, his friend would himself demonstrate the fallacy of such an assertion, and the injustice of such an inference.

virtues and his talents.—This extraordinary statement, for extraordinary it must be considered, after Brissot had publicly proclaimed himself a rebel and a traitor, extorted from Lord Loughborough, who had recently been appointed Chancellor, the sarcastic remark, that since friendships were founded on taste and sentiment,* he did doubt that Lord Lauderdale's friendships were always formed on correct principles. As there was a taste in pictures, for objects in ruins, for desolated cities, shattered palaces, and prostrated temples, so might there be a similar taste in moral and political questions. To some minds, a people in a state of insurrection might be a sublime object; and to a mind heated with such a view, a more quiet and orderly course of events might appear dull and insipid.

It is perfectly natural, that confidence should be derived from a consciousness of strength; but the opposition, at this period, improving on the wisdom of experience, seemed to become confident in proportion as their numbers diminished, and their influence decreased. They had early resolved to oppose the war with France, just, necessary, and unavoidable, as it was, in every stage of its progress, and to suffer no opportunity to escape for pressing on the minds of Parliament, and of the country, the wisdom and the necessity of peace. They admitted, indeed, in their speeches, the propriety of supporting the war with vigour; but all their declarations and resolutions went to prove that it was neither politic nor just, and, consequently, to enfeeble its operations by directing the public opinion against it. By no means dismayed by the ill-success of his past efforts, Mr. Fox, on the eighteenth of February, again brought the question before the House.—On this occasion, he went over much of his old ground of argument, repeating his charge against Ministers, of having provoked the war by their conduct; again accusing them of insincerity in their negotiation, which he treated as a farce and a delusion; not an honest endeavour to preserve the blessings of peace, but a fraudulent expedient to throw dust in the eyes of the people of this country, in order that they might be hurried blindly into

* *Id, in quo est* OMNIS VIS AMICITIÆ, *voluntatum, studiorum, sententiarum, summa consensio.* Cicero de Amicitiâ, Cap. IV.

a war.—And strange to say, he drew this inference from an attentive perusal of the correspondence between Lord Grenville and Mr. Chauvelin, which supply premises from which a directly opposite deduction must, it is conceived, be drawn by every cool and impartial mind. He also taxed the tone and language of the British ministers with haughtiness, while he descried in the communications of the French government, fraught as they were with fraud, perfidy, dissimulation, falsehood, and insolence, without a parallel in the annals of diplomacy, nothing to move his indignation, or to provoke his censures. His attacks were solely directed against the measures of the British Cabinet. A memorial which had been presented by Lord Auckland, on the 25th of January, to the States-General of Holland, he stigmatized as a paper which, for the contempt and ridicule it expressed of the French, stood unparalleled in diplomatic history; a paper in which the whole of them, without distinction, who had been in the exercise of power since the commencement of the Revolution, were styled a set of wretches and loaded with other opprobrious terms.—It was called, a silly and insulting paper,* which, if written without instructions, proved his lordship

* Debrett's Parliamentary Debates, for 1793, p. 503, et seq.—The following is the memorial to which Mr. Fox here adverted:

"Memorial presented by Lord Auckland, his Britannic Majesty's Minister at the Hague, to their High Mightinesses the States-General.

"High and Mighty Lords,

"The undersigned Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty, takes the earliest opportunity, in consequence of the express orders of the King, to lay before your High Mightinesses, copies of all the papers which have been exchanged, from the 27th of September last, to the 20th of this month, between Lord Grenville, Secretary of State to his Majesty, and M. Chauvelin.

"The King, High and Mighty Lords, is firmly persuaded, that the sentiments and principles expressed by Great Britain, are perfectly conformable to those which animate your Republic, and that your High Mightinesses are disposed fully to concur in the measures which the present crisis demands, and which are a necessary consequence of those sentiments and principles.

"The circumstances which have led to this crisis are too recent, and the conduct of the King is too well known, for the undersigned to have occasion here to enter into any long detail. It is not quite four years since certain miscreants, assuming the name of Philosophers, have presumed to think themselves capable of establishing a new system of civil society. In order to realize this dream, the offspring of vanity, it became necessary for them to overturn and destroy all established notions of subordination, of morals, and of religion, which had

to be very unfit for his situation; and which, if written by the instructions of Ministers, proved that, while, as they pretended, they were courting peace, they were using every manœuvre to provoke war.

hitherto constituted the security, the happiness, and the consolation, of mankind. These destructive projects have but too well succeeded; but the effects of the new system, which they wished to introduce, have only served to demonstrate the folly and wickedness of its authors. The events which have since so rapidly followed, surpass, in atrocity, all that has hitherto sullied the page of history; property, liberty, security, and even life itself, have been the sport of this unbridled phrenzy of the passions, of this spirit of rapine, of hatred, and of the most cruel and unnatural ambition. The annals of mankind cannot present a period in which, in so short a space, so many crimes have been committed, so many misfortunes produced, and so many tears shed; in a word, at this very moment these horrors appear to have attained their utmost height.

"During all this time, the King, surrounded by his people, who enjoyed, under the favour of Providence, a degree of prosperity without example, could not behold the misfortunes of others without the strongest emotions of pity and indignation: but, faithful to his principles, his Majesty has never permitted himself to interfere in the internal concerns of a foreign nation; he has never departed from that system of neutrality which he had adopted.

"This conduct (which the King has seen, with satisfaction, to have been equally observed by Your High Mightinesses), the good faith of which all Europe has acknowledged, and which ought to have been respected on many other accounts, has not been sufficient to secure his Majesty, his people, and the Republic, from the most dangerous, and the most criminal conspiracies.

"For several months past, projects of ambition and aggrandizement, dangerous to the tranquillity and the security of all Europe, have been openly avowed; attempts have been made to spread throughout England and this country, maxims subversive of all social order, and they have not scrupled to give to these detestable attempts the name of a Revolutionary Power. Ancient and solemn treaties, guaranteed by the King, have been infringed, and the rights and territories of the Republic have been violated. His Majesty has, therefore, in his wisdom, judged it necessary to make preparations proportioned to the nature of the circumstances. The King has consulted his Parliament; and the measures which his Majesty had thought fit to take, have been received with the most lively and unanimous approbation, of a people who abhor anarchy and irreligion, who love their King, and who will maintain their constitution.

"Such, High and Mighty Lords, are the motives of a conduct, the wisdom and equity of which have hitherto insured to the King your concert and co-operation.

"His Majesty, in all that he has done, has ever been vigilant in the support of the rights and the security of the United Provinces. The declaration which the undersigned had the honour to deliver to your High Mightinesses, on the 13th of November last, and the arrival of a small squadron, destined to protect the coasts of the Republic, until their own maritime force should be assembled, are strong proofs of this fact. Your High Mightinesses have witnessed the disposition of the King, in every thing which his Majesty has hitherto done.—

Mr. Fox wholly omitted to notice what constituted a principal point of consideration, in the discussion of this question, that the memorial of Lord Auckland, which gave him so much displeasure, and from which he drew such unwarrantable inferences, was not drawn up till four days after the murder of the King of France, till one day after the Executive Council had issued orders for the recall of Chauvelin, and till long after it had become notorious, that they were bent on waging war against all the neighbouring powers, as necessary for the accomplishment of their avowed plan for *revolutionizing* all Europe. There was nothing advanced in this memorial which was not strictly true, and which it was not perfectly right to press, at such a moment, upon the attention of our allies. But any reflections which represented the French Revolution as different from that stupendous monument of human wisdom, which the disordered optics of Mr. Fox, and of his little band of political coadjutors, had seen in it, was certain to call forth the pointed censure of the opposition. The orator then transferred the scene of his observations from France to Poland, in order to represent the conduct of Russia and Prussia, in interfering to produce a counter-revolution in that country, as infinitely more mischievous, and more atrocious, than that of the French rebels and regicides; and as calling more imperatively for the effective interposition of Great Britain. The tyrannical conduct of the courts of Berlin and St. Petersburgh, on that occasion, deserved all the censure which it received from Mr. Fox; and it was animadverted on, with becoming severity, in a former chapter.—But, in the first place, the remote situation of Poland rendered the transactions in that country of less consequence to England, than the events of a Revolution which had occurred,

You will not be less sensible of it in the measures which are now preparing. In consequence, his Majesty is persuaded, that he shall continue to experience, on the part of your High Mightinesses, a perfect conformity of principle and conduct. This conformity can alone give to the united efforts of the two countries, the energy necessary for their common defence; to oppose a barrier to those evils with which Europe is menaced, and to preserve, against every attempt, the security, the tranquillity, and the independence of a State, the happiness of which your High Mightinesses ensure, by the wisdom and firmness of your government.

"Done at the Hague, the 25th January, 1793.

(Signed) "AUCKLAND."

as it were, at her very doors.—Besides the principles avowed by the authors of the counter-revolution, in the one country, and those promulgated by the leaders of the Revolution in the other, though equally inadequate to defend the conduct of those who acted upon them, were not only at variance with each other, but were directly opposite in their effects on other nations.—Nor should it have escaped the recollection of Mr. Fox, that he had himself interfered, not long before, and most unconstitutionally, to *prevent* the interposition of the British Court, in curbing the ambitious spirit of the Russian Empress, who, at that time, had resolved to effect a counter-revolution in Poland.

Having embodied his opinions, in the form of resolutions, he submitted them to the House, whom he called upon to declare, that it was not for the honour or interest of Great Britain, to make war upon France on account of the internal circumstances of that country, for the purpose of either suppressing or punishing any opinions and principles, however pernicious in their tendency, which might prevail there; or of establishing, among the French people, any particular form of government;—that the particular complaints which had been stated against the conduct of the French government were not of a nature to justify war in the first instance, without having attempted to obtain redress by negotiation;—that it appeared to the House, that in the late negotiation between his Majesty's Ministers, and the agents of the French government, the said Ministers did not take such measures as were likely to procure redress without a rupture, for the grievances of which they complained; and particularly that they never stated distinctly to the French government, any terms or conditions, the accession to which, on the part of France, would induce his Majesty to persevere in a system of neutrality;—that it did not appear that the security of Europe, and the rights of independent nations which had been stated as grounds of war against France, had been attended to by his Majesty's Ministers in the case of Poland, in the invasion of which unhappy country, both in the last year, and more recently, the most open contempt of the law of nations, and the most unjustifiable spirit of aggrandizement had been manifested, without having produced,

as far as appeared to the House, any remonstrance from his Majesty's Ministers;—and, finally, that it was the duty of his Majesty's Ministers, in the present crisis, to advise his Majesty against entering into engagements which might prevent Great Britain from making a separate peace, whenever the interests of his Majesty, and his people, might render such a measure adviseable, or which might countenance an opinion in Europe, that his Majesty was acting in concert with other powers, for the unjustifiable purpose of compelling the people of France to submit to a form of government not approved by that nation.

Mr. Fox must have known that resolutions of this kind could never be adopted by the House, which had so recently supported the address to the Throne to which these resolutions gave the most complete contradiction. His only object, therefore, must have been to record his sentiments, and, if possible, to prevent the formation of a continental alliance, (which, in the debates on the commercial treaty with France, a few years before, he had strongly and truly represented, as a wise policy on the part of Great Britain,) by means of which the grand object of the war, the repression of French principles, and of French ambition, might best be attained.—Unless such was his intention, nothing could be more impolitic, or unwise, than to seek to irritate and to enrage the very powers, with some of whom his Sovereign had actually formed, and with others of whom he was on the point of forming, alliances; and at the commencement of a war too!—And if such *were* his intention, this circumstance, coupled with his avowed admiration of the French Revolution, and with his connection with Chauvelin, exempts all those who have accused him of a predilection for French principles, and of entertaining a wish for the success of the French cause, from the charge of groundless prejudice, and hasty decision.

The Minister took no part in the discussion which followed these resolutions.—Mr. Burke averred, that there was not an argument then used, or a proposition made, by Mr. Fox, which he had not seen in French papers, declared to be such arguments and such propositions

as would be offered to that House.* Whether this strange coincidence arose from accident, or whether the opinions alluded to were taken by Brissot, and Mr. Fox, one from the other, or grew out of one common stock, Mr. Burke left to the House to decide. He then ridiculed the novelty of Mr. Fox's conduct in recommending one war, while he deprecated another; and stated his reasons for thinking that the conduct of Russia and Prussia towards Poland, which he highly disapproved, afforded no just grounds for involving this country in a contest with them. He represented French aggrandizement, and French encroachment, as the first objects of England's vigilance and jealousy. —France was near—Prussia and Poland were distant. England had seen Sweden overturn the Constitution of Poland; she afterwards saw the Czar depose Stanislaus, and put Augustus on the throne of that kingdom. In short, she saw various revolutions in Poland, and, ultimately, a partition of it, and never stirred a hand; nor did Mr. Fox himself ever propose that she should stir, till the moment, when the hostile and dangerous proceedings in France, called for the whole force and energy of the country to be directed against her. This mode of acting was new and unprecedented. When war was declared by France, and every multiplied offence offered against Great Britain; when every principle she adopted, and every act she committed, should be condemned and resisted; to censure that resistance, to turn the attention of the House to a remote part of the world, and neglect the balance of power at and near home, was inexplicable conduct.

Mr. Burke commented, with great propriety, on the extraordinary disposition which Mr. Fox had lately manifested to find France always just.—Though, by taking possession of Geneva and Basil, she had destroyed the independence of Switzerland; though, by taking Mentz, she had secured to herself the navigation of the Rhine; though, by entering, and, under the mask of friendship, seizing upon the Low Countries, she had aggrandized herself beyond all bounds; and though she had, under the same mask, entered Savoy, annexed it to her domi-

* Debrett's Parliamentary Debates for 1793, p. 508.

nions, and planted the sterile tree of liberty in that sterile soil; and though she had ultimately declared war against Great Britain, France was still most just, and Great Britain was always wrong!! Mr. Fox having called the King of Prussia *a swindler*, Mr. Burke reprobated the use of such language, as highly improper and disrespectful. He stated the difference between the relative situation of Prussia and of France to this country.—The latter, exclusive of her enormities, was an enemy; besides, she had vilified the King and constitution of England, and was, therefore, a fit object of opprobrium But to abuse the King of Prussia, who was in alliance with us, was neither politic nor decorous. Indeed, the *Sans-culottes* language seemed now to have become the *bon ton*. The word despot was a new epithet in diplomatic language.—Mr. Burke, however, reminded the House that this country had formed alliances with some of the greatest despots on the earth. It had been her policy to consider, not the character of her ally, but his ability to assist her in checking the ambitious spirit of France. The grand alliance was formed for the purpose of interfering with the internal government of that kingdom, and to compel Louis XIV. to convene the States-General. He then proceeded to state his decided opinion, that France was not, at this time, in a situation to negotiate with other powers.—It was evident, from their very title, that the *Provisionary Executive Council* had no authority to treat—they had no power, either by delegation or usage.—Roland, he described as a factious traitor, who had deceived the confidence of his King, and led him on to ruin. Le Brun was the son of a Swiss porter, and rose to the rank of Minister of State, from being an obscure scribe at Liege, and afterwards the conductor of a newspaper. He was driven from Liege with disgrace, to adorn the senate and executive administration of the French government. There was nothing, then, in the personal characters of these men, to give them sufficient consequence to be accepted as the substitute for a regular government, and to supply the defect of legitimate authority.—Condorcet, the most humane of all murderers, and Brissot, the most virtuous of all pickpockets, were not, in the estimation of Mr. Burke, of weight enough to assume the power. Dumouriez could not answer for the obedience of his army; he, therefore, was out of the question.

As to Chauvelin, the black ingratitude which marked his character must excite the abhorrence of every honest man. His father was a servant to the King, and died one day, suddenly, in attendance on his person; the King took his son, then only five years old, under his protection, put him in his father's place, and brought him up; and the return which he made for this kindness, was to join the band of wretches who murdered his benefactor.—In short, upon a minute examination of the conduct of the whole National Convention, Mr. Burke declared his inability to find one of the members who was not stained with the most infamous crimes. In the whole group, taking Robespierre, Santerre, and all, the only man of any degree of honour among them was the hangman.—That poor fellow had some degree of feeling, from which his colleagues were exempt; he had the spirit to refuse to execute the King himself, though there was no want of deputies.* Mr. Burke, finally, declared his fixed opinion, that if we continued at peace with France, the government of this country would not last ten years.

The debate was carried on for some time, by Mr. Grey, Mr. Adam, Mr. Jekyll, Mr. Vaughan, Mr. Lambton, Mr. William Smith, and Major Maitland (brother to the Earl of Lauderdale), who adopted the opinions and principles of Mr. Fox, without adducing any additional argument, in support of them; and by Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Powys, Mr. Windham, Sir Richard Hill, Sir Francis Basset, Sir George Cornwall, and Sir Henry Houghton, on the other side. On a division, the resolutions of Mr. Fox were rejected by two hundred and seventy-four members, against forty-four, being the whole number that voted with Mr. Fox. In the course of this discussion, Mr. Burke, in proving the disposition of the French government to interfere in the internal concerns of England, quoted a passage from a speech of Danton, in the Convention, who remarked, "that the scaffold erected in Westminster Hall, for the eternal trial of Mr. Hastings, would serve for the British Ministers, and even—(Mr. Burke said, he felt an almost insuperable horror in expressing it)—even for GEORGE himself!" But so multiforious and so

* Debrett's Parliamentary Debates for 1793, p. 513-514.

notorious were the proofs of this hostile and aggressive disposition, that nothing but scepticism, bordering on insanity, could doubt, and nothing but wilful blindness could overlook, it. Notwithstanding the decision of the House, Mr. Grey, on the 21st of February, brought forward another string of resolutions, the same in spirit with those of Mr. Fox, but much longer, and containing more assertions at direct variance with facts known to the whole nation. These were treated with marked contempt; they met with a silent negative; and were rejected without a division.

It had been deemed expedient, by his Majesty's Ministers, to erect barracks, for the better accommodation of the troops; and, indeed, from the many attempts which had been already made to imitate the conduct of the French rebels, by seducing the soldiers from their duty, it was highly politic and necessary to let them mix as little as possible with the lower classes of people, in the different towns in which they were quartered. Independently, too, of this important consideration, barracks were more desirable than any other quarters, as they afforded better opportunities for enforcing a strict discipline among the troops, while they released the publican from a very heavy and serious burden.—But, in pursuance of the apparent determination, lately imputed by Mr. Burke to the opposition, to find Great Britain always in the wrong, this erection of barracks was represented, by Mr. M. A. Taylor, as part of a system which betrayed an evident preconcerted design to curb and over-awe the people by the bayonet and the sword, instead of applying, if necessary, the wholesome correction of the laws of England. Mr. Fox supported this preposterous supposition, and argued, at length, against standing armies, as dangerous to the liberties of the subject. The jealousy of standing armies, Mr. Pitt remarked, like other undefined phrases calculated to agitate the minds of men, had been, on former occasions, very successfully employed to excite popular clamour. If, by a standing army, was meant, an army kept up without the authority or consent of Parliament, that, indeed, would be an object of jealousy; —but if by it was meant, an army voted from year to year, regulated and paid by Parliament, according to the practice of the constitution, it was no object of national jealousy. Much of the clamour, excited

against a standing army, in 1740, had been raised by men whose object was not merely to weaken the hands of administration, but, by removing the army, to bring in the Pretender, and destroy that very Parliament whose power and authority they affected to magnify. The use, then, made of popular words ought not be forgotten. The erection of barracks having been coupled with a supposed system of Ministers for passing by the House of Commons, and extending the prerogative of the Crown, Mr. Pitt challenged Mr. Taylor, or any other man, to produce an instance in which the functions of Parliament had been invaded, or the prerogative extended beyond its known constitutional limits.

Mr. Pitt defended the proposed measure of extending the use of barracks, from the peculiar circumstances of the country. Had it been an entirely new measure, he should not have been deterred, by any fear of innovation, from doing that which he knew to be necessary for the safety of the realm;—but he denied that it was an innovation; for, in all places where troops were in general stationary, barracks had long since been erected. A spirit had appeared in some of the manufacturing towns, which made it necessary that troops should be kept near them. In such towns, then, to dispose of the troops in barracks was a much better plan than to distribute them among the mass of the people, where jealousy might rankle into hatred, and produce tumult and disturbance;—consequences which would be effectually prevented by keeping the army in a state of separation from the people.—This plan would, also, operate as a preventive against the seduction of the army, who were, by certain persons, considered as the chief obtacle to the execution of their designs. Mr. Pitt noticed several attempts to corrupt the commonalty, and one, at Edinburgh, to excite a spirit of mutiny among the soldiers, though happily without effect. He closed his speech with an ironical compliment to the eloquence and abilities of Mr. Taylor, and to the knowledge derived from the production of a red-morocco quarto, of Blackstone's works, all which, however combined, had not possessed sufficient power to produce his conversion.—Mr. Pitt having moved the order of the day, it was carried without a division.

On the 25th of February, Mr. Dundas produced his annual statement of Indian affairs, and, in a clear, luminous, and satisfactory detail of the state of India, its expences, and revenue, proved that our important possessions in that country were in a most flourishing condition, and that, upon an average of three years, of which 1789 was the last, the receipts exceeded the expenditure, by 1,666,079*l.* A few days after, on the fourth of March, Mr. Sheridan, pursuant to a notice previously given, called the attention of the House of Commons to the alleged existence of seditious practices, and treasonable designs;—when he exerted all the powers of an active mind, and a fertile genius, to represent all the dangers, so generally believed to be real, as the creatures of fancy; the visionary offsprings of a disordered imagination;—and all the measures adopted with a view to avert or to repel them, as the machinations of Ministers to alarm the public, and to reconcile them to a war with France. He moved, that a formal enquiry into the subject should be immediately instituted by the House of Commons.

In opposition to the extraordinary assertions of Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Windham observed, that the real question was, not whether there existed an actual insurrection in the country, but whether there did not appear manifest proofs of a tendency to produce one. He justly remarked, that the notoriety of seditious practices rendered all arguments useless. The adherents of Paine had boasted, that the principles which had produced the Revolution in France were operating in this kingdom with the silence and rapidity of thought. Mr. Windham expressed his firm belief of this fact, which, he said, might be ascertained from the general opinions of the people,—from the fears of those who dreaded, and from the sanguine expectations of those who wished, it. The monarchy of France had been overturned from the neglect to adopt timely measures of prevention;—and he hoped that we should take warning by the lamentable fate of that unhappy country. But these apprehensions, these fears, and these hopes, appeared fit subjects for ridicule to Mr. Fox, who expressed his total disbelief of plots and conspiracies, and his perfect concurrence with the sentiments of Mr. Sheridan. Mr. Burke, however, corroborated the statement of Mr. Windham, and affirmed, that the French had long been

connected with a faction in this country, whose object was to force us into an alliance with France, for the purpose of propagating, in concert, the most mischievous principles. He fully substantiated his affirmation, by various extracts from the correspondence of the Revolution Society with the Jacobin Clubs in France, and from the addresses of different bodies of Englishmen to the National Convention. He remarked, that the representatives of the landed interest in France were now nearly annihilated by confiscation and murder, and concluded, that from the moment when equality, and the sovereignty of the people (as it was called) became the rule of any government, property must be destroyed, and that religion, morality, and law, which grew out of property, must fall with it. The House was satisfied with the discussion, and came to no division on Mr. Sheridan's motion; which seemed, indeed, to be less calculated to produce any impression on the House itself, than to supply a theme for animadversion out of it.

As the country was now, by the insatiate ambition and aggressive spirit of Republican France, engaged in a war, not only the justice, but the necessity of which was generally acknowledged (for the negative assertions of Mr. Fox, and the small band of his political associates in the House of Commons, with the disaffected societies in different parts of the country, could only form exceptions to the general rule), it became the duty of the Minister to provide the means for carrying it on with vigour and effect; and, accordingly, on the 11th of March, Mr. Pitt proposed such means to the House. On this occasion he stated his fixed determination, let the expences of the war be what they might, of strictly adhering to his plan for the reduction of the national debt, by the appropriation of an annual million, with the addition of 200,000*l.*, which, it had been agreed, in the preceding year, should be set apart for that purpose. He also expressed his resolution of avoiding the evil of an accumulation of unfunded debt, by bringing that description of debt to a distinct account every year. He then enumerated the different articles of supply, rating the proposed number of seamen and marines at 45,000, making the whole amount to 11,182,213*l.* 3*s.* 8½*d.*—This sum included a vote of credit

for one million and a half of contingent expences, as it was probable that a greater number of seamen, and of troops also, than was contained in the present statement, might be wanted in the course of the campaign. The ordinary ways and means to meet this expenditure, including the expected surplus of the consolidated fund to April, 1794, and half a million to be paid by the East-India Company, amounted to 6,649,696*l.*; and it was proposed to supply the deficiency by a loan of four millions and a half.—In order to pay the interest of this loan, it was meant to continue the taxes which had been imposed for the purpose of defraying the expence of the Spanish armament, which produced 287,000*l.*

Mr. Pitt, on this occasion, remarked, that, as he had always placed his chief glory in promoting the public prosperity of the country, in increasing the revenue, and in the gradual reduction of the national debt, with a view to its final extinction, he never could have given his countenance to a war which would counteract all his patriotic views, if he had not been fully impressed with the conviction, that it was not only unavoidable, but, under the circumstances of the case, absolutely necessary to the political existence of Great Britain, and of all Europe. In detailing the motives of the war, he said he had heard of wars of honour, which had also been deemed wars of prudence and of policy. —On the present occasion, whatever could raise the feelings, or animate the exertions, of a people, concurred to prompt us to the contest. The contempt which the French had displayed for a neutrality, most rigidly observed on our part; the repeated violations of their plighted faith; their presumptuous attempts to interfere in the government of this country, to arm our subjects against ourselves, to vilify a Monarch, the object of our gratitude, our reverence, and our affections; and to separate the court from the people, by representing them as influenced by different motives, and acting from different interests: after provocations so wanton, so often repeated, and so highly aggravated, did not this become, on our part, a war of honour, —a war necessary to assert the spirit of the nation, and the dignity of the British name? He had heard of wars undertaken for the general security of Europe; had it been ever so threatened as by the pro-

gress of the French arms, and by the system of ambition and aggrandizement avowed, adopted, and pursued by the French government? He had heard of wars for the defence of the Protestant religion;—our enemies, in this instance, were the enemies of all religions;—of Lutheranism, of Calvinism, of Christians of every denomination; and anxious to propagate every where, by the force of their arms, that system of infidelity which they openly embraced. He had heard of wars undertaken in defence of the lawful succession to the throne; but we were now fighting to preserve our hereditary Monarchy: we were at war with those who sought to destroy the whole fabric of our Constitution. When he looked at these things, they afforded him encouragement and consolation; and supported him in the discharge of that painful task, to the performance of which he was now called by his duty. The resolutions, for carrying his plan into effect, met the concurrence of the House.

The means for meeting the exigencies of the war being thus provided, the Minister next directed his attention to further measures, for securing the internal tranquillity of the kingdom, and for counteracting the efforts of our enemies, foreign and domestic, to disturb it.—With this view, the Attorney-General brought in a bill for the prevention of all traitorous correspondence, taken in the legal sense, and full import, of the term, and extending, of course, to all treasonable intercourse and connection whatever. The leading objects of this act, which professed to be founded on the true meaning and spirit of the twenty-fifth of Edward the Third, which constituted the law of treason at this time, went to make it high treason to sell, deliver, or cause to be delivered, to the persons at present exercising the sovereign authority in France, their armies, navies, or subjects, any naval or military stores, coin, bullion, corn, clothing, and other necessaries. 2. To make it high treason, for any British subject, to purchase lands in France, or stock in the French funds, or to lend money upon lands, in France, by way of mortgage. 3. To make it a misdemeanour for any British subject to go to France without a licence under the Privy-Seal; for any British subject, actually resident in France, to return to this country without a passport from government; and for any persons, who had so returned

without a passport, to leave the place where they landed, without previously giving such security for their good behaviour as might be deemed sufficient by government. And, lastly, the insurance of French ships, during the war, was made a misdemeanour. This bill, in its progress through the House, was strongly opposed by Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Curwen, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Grey, Mr. Thomas Grenville, and Lord John Russel. It was stigmatized by Mr. Fox, generally, as utterly repugnant to the principles of freedom, justice, and policy, and as militating, in the highest degree, against the interests of the people. His objections extended not merely to the principle, but to every clause, of the bill; and the whole tenour of his arguments displayed the strongest desire to preserve a free and open intercourse with France, as in the time of profound peace, though in direct opposition to the principles and opinions which he had advanced in a former debate, on the commercial treaty with France. He characterized the bill as an attack on the fundamental liberties of England, and as a measure equally ineffectual, impolitic, and tyrannical. Mr. Curwen considered the attempt to prevent the purchase of lands, or stock, in France, as absurd, because no man in his senses would lay out his property in the purchase of lands or stock in France, at a time when there was no regular government there, and, consequently, no security for the enjoyment of property. This supposition was, indeed, natural, but it was contrary to fact, for it was pretty well understood, that a leader of opposition, in the Upper House, had actually sold a considerable portion of his paternal inheritance, and expended the produce in the purchase of confiscated estates, the fruits of successful rebellion in France; and many purchases had been made by Englishmen in the French funds.

On the other hand, the bill was supported chiefly by the Attorney and Solicitor General, Mr. Martin, Mr. Frederick North, and Mr. Burke. The first of these defended it from the imputation of tyranny, and shewed that the same provisions had been adopted, in a similar bill, at the era of the Revolution. It was considered by Mr. F. North as called for and justified by the exigence of the moment, by the

relative situation of the country with respect to France, and by the situation of France herself, with respect to her resources and her means of carrying on the war;—in short, he regarded it as vindicated by every principle of the law of nations which made self-preservation the paramount object of every country. He entered also into a particular examination of each separate provision, and shewed they were all excellently adapted to the purposes for which they were framed.

It was observed by Mr. Burke, that, in those periods when the constitution was allowed to exist in purity and vigour, it might be seen, that provisions, similar to what were now about to be introduced, had been adopted without difficulty, and, without inconvenience, obeyed. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus act was the first which followed the Bill of Rights, and the other laws by which our constitution was, at that period, secured. Five successive acts of Parliament had passed, every one of which contained similar enactments; and it was worthy of remark, that all these measures had been adopted when the government was in the hands of the Whigs, who deemed them defensive securities of the liberties of the nation.—In this case the Whigs had been supported by the Tories; both united to repel arbitrary power, and to check the more odious despotism of a republic; and both joined in repelling the common enemy with that sincerity, honour, and patriotism, which characterized every honest Englishman. He entered into the consideration of the bill in two points of view, for the purpose of ascertaining whether it was conformable to law, and whether it was consistent with policy; and, having satisfied his mind that it was both constitutional and politic, he assented to it, in the persuasion that it would tend to prohibit an adulterous communication with France, and, by withholding from that country resources to be derived from this, would prevent Englishmen from acting hostilely against England, and from making contracts to promote its ruin.

Mr. Fox endeavoured to prolong the discussions on the bill, and to retard the period of its passing, for the avowed purpose of ascertaining the sentiments of the people upon its merits; but the delay was

strongly resisted by Mr. Pitt, and it finally passed, in the month of April, by 154 votes against 53. In the House of Lords this bill was warmly attacked by the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Lansdowne, and the Earls of Guilford, *Lauderdale*, and Stanhope.—But the opposition here, as in the House of Commons, proved stronger in language than in numbers, for, on a division, they were supported only by *eleven votes.*

CHAPTER XXII.

Means adopted for supporting the Allies of Great Britain—Negotiations for new alliances on the Continent—Designs of the French upon Holland—Dumouriez the supposed author of the plan for the invasion of the United Provinces—Precautions suggested by Lord Auckland, and taken by the Dutch Government, for defeating his plan—Dumouriez's proclamation to the People of Holland—Contradictory to his own avowed principles—Reprinted, with comments, by the States-General—The French enter Holland—Breda surrenders, through the treachery of the Governor—Gertruydenberg follows the example—Brave but ineffectual resistance of the garrison of Klundert—Gallant conduct of Boetzelaar, the Governor of Williamstadt—Fruitless attempts of the French to reduce that fortress—Memorial, presented by Lord Auckland and the Imperial Minister to the States-General—Observations upon it—It is attacked by Mr. Sheridan, in the House of Commons—Animadversions upon his speech—The Memorial is defended by Mr. Pitt—Stigmatized by Mr. Fox—His misrepresentations of the views of the Combined Powers exposed and corrected—Mr. Sheridan's motion for an Address to the King negatived by two hundred and eleven votes against thirty-six—Similar address moved in the Upper House by Lord Lauderdale—Opposed by Lord Grenville—Rejected by the House—The House adopt, by a vote of approbation, the sentiments expressed in the Memorial—Inquiry into the source of the interest taken by the Opposition in the fate of the Commissioners detained, as hostages, by Dumouriez—Character and conduct of the Commissioners—All of them shewn to be Traitors and Regicides—Reflections on the crime of murder, and the expediency of an universal compact of nations, for the punishment of murderers, suggested—Temporary distress in the commercial world—Effective measures adopted by Mr. Pitt for their relief—Mr. Grey's plan of Parliamentary Reform—Supported by Mr. Whitbread—His notions upon certain great events in English History examined—Mr. Pitt opposes the motion—Shews the radical difference between the plan of Reform which he had formerly suggested himself, and that now proposed by Mr. Grey—He takes a view of the effects produced by the conduct of the French Reformers—Shews, from a similarity of sentiment and language, that all the petitions, presented to the House, had been the work of the same hands—Contends that the House cannot entertain petitions for a pretended right of Universal Suffrage—Ridicules the idea of abstract rights in a Social State—Accuses the present plan of being founded on French principles, and traces its consequences to the introduction of French Anarchy—Proves all the modern theories of Reform to be calculated only to deceive and delude the people—Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan support Mr. Grey's plan, and tax Mr. Pitt with inconsistency—Motion rejected by 282 against 41—New motion by Mr. Fox for promoting a peace with France—Opposed by Mr. Windham and Mr. Burke—Mr. Pitt's

speech on the subject—Asserts the impolicy of any advance to the French Government, and the impracticability of making peace at the present juncture—Motion negatived by 187 against 47—Parliament prorogued.

[1793.] The attention of Mr. Pitt was not limited, during this period, to the adoption of such measures as were necessary for the preservation of domestic tranquillity, nor to those financial and military preparations which a state of warfare requires, but was extended to the grand object of inspiring those powers who were already in alliance with us, with courage and confidence, by promises of active co-operation and effective support; and to the acquisition of new allies, in order to strengthen the grand confederacy against France, now justly considered as the general enemy of all thrones, of all regular authority, and of all established dominion. The arms of Republican France had kept pace with her principles. The King of Sardinia had been attacked without the smallest pretence, and the greater part of his dominions annexed to France.—The Independent States of Genoa, Geneva, and Switzerland, had not escaped the destructive rage of these general disturbers of the peace of nations, who already displayed the most determined resolution to carry into full effect their theoretic system for promoting the revolution of Europe.

On the side of Germany, Spires, Worms, and Mentz, had surrendered to the conventional troops;—the Bishoprick of Liege had acknowledged their superiority; and the whole of the Austrian Netherlands, overrun by their arms, had experienced the natural effects of French fraternity, in every species of violence, rapine, fraud, and oppression.—The invasion of Holland had been projected, long before the declaration of war against the Stadtholder; and it is highly probable that Dumouriez himself was the author of the project;—certain, at least, it is, that a mode of carrying it into execution had been devised, and suggested, by that general, early in the winter. The British ambassador at the Hague, however, whose vigilance and zeal had succeeded in gaining full information of this notable scheme, had, in concert with the Dutch government, adopted precautionary measures for the defeat of its object. Immediately after the declaration

of war, preparations were made for the execution of the plan, and the active and sanguine mind of Dumouriez anticipated, in the conquest of Holland, the acquisition of fresh laurels, and new and copious sources of plunder. He proposed to march, with the greater part of his army, to the shores of the Bies Bosch, an arm of the sea which he meant to cross at Moerdyke, with a view to land at Daert, where he expected to be joined by a numerous body of Dutch rebels. Thus reinforced, he hoped, by a rapid march, by Rotterdam, Leyden, and Haarlem, to bear down all opposition, and to enter the gates of Amsterdam in triumph.—During this time, strong divisions were stationed to keep in check the Dutch fortresses, to his right and left, Breda, Gertruydenberg, Bergen-op-zoom, Klundert, and Williamstadt;—while Miranda, with a powerful force, was destined to attack Maestricht and Nimeguen.

Before he embarked on this arduous enterprize, he issued, from his head-quarters, at Antwerp, a proclamation, addressed to the people of Holland, in the true style of those revolutionary and regicidal jacobins, whose principles he professed to abhor, and whose conduct he had long, privately, condemned.—He told the Dutch, that their Stadtholder violated his duty, and held them in slavery and oppression;—they had formerly, he said, appealed to the French nation for succour; but as France herself then groaned under the despotism of a perfidious court, they were made the sport of vile intriguers, who then governed France. Every hope that could excite to revolt, every argument that could animate to rebellion, was held out to seduce the people from their duty. French freedom, and French generosity, (which Dumouriez himself at this time *knew*, and soon after *acknowledged*, to be the most galling slavery, and the most degrading oppression,) were extolled; and freedom and security promised, in the usual language of the republican demagogues. The Dutch were assured, that it was not against them that the French nation had declared war; friends to all people, tyrants were her only enemies. The English, so proud of their liberty, suffered themselves to be misled by gold, and by the falsehoods of a despot, of whom he did not scruple to predict they would soon be weary. The more enemies the French had to

encounter, the more would their principles be propagated; persuasion and victory would support the imprescriptible rights of man; and nations would be weary of exhausting their blood and treasures for a small number of individuals, who kept discord alive merely to deceive and to enslave the people. He proceeded to declare, that the French had no enmity but to the Prince of Orange, and his supporters, (that is, all good and loyal Dutchmen); and that such of the people who would rise against their oppressors, should partake of the plunder of their property. But this revolutionary logic made but little impression on the sober minds of the States-General, who reprinted Dumouriez's proclamation, accompanied with appropriate comments, demonstrating its fallacy, its folly, its profligacy, and its falsehood.

On the Seventeenth of February, Dumouriez's army entered the Dutch territory, and took their station between Breda and Bergen-op-zoom; while the advanced guard pushed forward to the shores of the Bies Bosch, in order to seize all the vessels which could be found, for transporting the army to their destined place of debarkation. But that same zeal and vigilance which had already discovered Dumouriez's plan, had, amongst other precautions, removed all those vessels which were so necessary to its accomplishment. While Dumouriez was employed in devising means for the removal of this obstacle, which, strange to say, he had not foreseen, General D'Arçon was instructed to lay siege to the strong and important fortress of Breda. The total inadequacy of his force to the enterprize for which it was destined, renders it highly probable that the French Commander trusted, for its success, to other instruments than arms. Count Byland, the governor, after an ineffectual canonade of three days, which had made not the smallest impression on the place, though it had nearly exhausted the ammunition of the little army which besieged it, basely violated his trust, and surrendered the town to the enemy.—For this act of treachery, or of cowardice, he was afterwards tried, convicted, disgraced and imprisoned for life.—Klundert was next attacked; and, though much less capable of defence than Breda, it was much better defended by the governor, who, being reduced to extremity, spiked his guns, and retired, with his brave garrison, towards Williamstadt;

—but he was unfortunately met, on his road, by a superior force, and, after a gallant resistance, met his fate in the field of honour, while his troops became prisoners to the French.

After the reduction of Breda, Gertruydenberg was attacked by the same troops, and basely surrendered, without a struggle. Not so the little fortress of Williamstadt, which was defended with the greatest gallantry by the brave Boetzelaer, who treated, with equal contempt, the menaces and the attacks of the assailants, headed by General Berneron. While this officer was employed in the siege of Williamstadt; while Miranda made vain efforts to reduce the fortress of Maestricht; and while Dumouriez was anxiously engaged in collecting a flotilla to convey his army to the land of promise, the veteran, General Clerfayt, who had maintained his station, during the winter, behind the Erfft, until he had received sufficient reinforcements to enable him to resume an offensive attitude, now sallied forth, most unexpectedly, poured down with his troops like a torrent on the French cantonments, swept every thing before him, and compelled the French commanders to forego, for the present, their schemes of conquest, and to limit their operations to measures of defence.

On the fifth of April, Lord Auckland, then the British Ambassador at the Hague, presented, in conjunction with the Austrian Minister, a memorial to the States-General, reminding them, that, in the preceding September, they, and his Britannic Majesty, had given a solemn assurance, that, in case the imminent danger which then threatened the lives of their most Christian Majesties, and their families, should be realized, they would not fail to pursue the most efficacious measures to prevent the persons who might render themselves guilty of so atrocious a crime from finding any asylum in their respective States. This event, his Lordship observed, had since taken place, and the divine vengeance seemed not to have been tardy. Some of these detestable regicides were now in such a situation, that they could be subjected to the sword of the law; the rest were still in the midst of a people whom they had plunged into an abyss of evils, and for whom famine, anarchy, and civil war, were about to prepare new calamities. In

short, every thing which had occurred seemed to sanction the belief, that the end of those wretches, whose madness and atrocities had filled with terror and indignation all those who respected the principles of religion, morality, and humanity, was not far distant.—It was, therefore, submitted to the enlightened judgment of the States, whether it would not be proper to employ all the means in their power to prohibit from entering their dominions in Europe, or their colonies, all those members of the National Convention, or of the pretended Executive Council, who had, directly or indirectly, participated in the said crime; and, if they should be discovered and arrested, to deliver them up to justice, that they might serve as a lesson to mankind.—In answer to this memorial, the States-General declared their hearty concurrence with the sentiments which it contained, and their resolution to deliver up any of the French regicides, who might fall into their hands, to the end that they might be pursued by justice, and punished with all the severity of the law.

This memorial, which only breathed that virtuous indignation against regicides which every honest mind must feel, and which only recommended that mode of proceeding against them, which was consonant with the laws both of God and of man, and which, indeed, was rendered necessary by the paramount principle of self-preservation; since there was not a crowned head, nor a legitimate Prince, in Europe, whom they had not openly devoted to destruction; was considered, by some of the philanthropic members of the British Opposition, in a very different light from that in which it had appeared to the States-General of Holland.—On the twenty-fifth of April, Mr. Sheridan, who had, from the commencement of the Revolution, evinced the most lively sensibility for the rebels of France, introduced this memorial to the notice of the House of Commons. His pretence for so doing was, that it contained sentiments hostile to the avowed object of the war; seeming to him to imply, that the war was carried on for the purpose of extermination.—There was not, however, one sentence, or expression, in the whole of the memorial, that conveyed any such idea, or that could sanction any such interpretation. But Mr. Sheridan complained that it stigmatized the French, as a nation of miscreants, and

proposed, that the commissioners of the Convention (who, by the treachery of Dumouriez, had been given up to the Dutch) should be murdered and assassinated. There was no such general reflection on the French nation to be found in the memorial, and the only proposal which was made, was to prevent the murderers of Louis the XVIth from receiving an asylum in the territories of Holland, or, if they came thither, to subject them to a legal process, and to legal punishment.—The commissioners had not been delivered up to the Dutch by Dumouriez, but to the Austrians, who had, indeed, sent them to Maestricht, for safe custody. And what appeared to Mr. Sheridan as *treachery*, on the part of the French general, must be regarded by others as *self-preservation*, since the commissioners had been sent for the express purpose of conveying Dumouriez to the scaffold; for it is certain that his death must have speedily followed his arrival at Paris;—and, indeed, if his own account may be credited, care had been taken to station bands of assassins on the road, at Gournay, Roye, and Senlis, in order to murder him.* Mr. Sheridan further stated, that this bloody proposal extended not only to those who voted for the King's death in the Convention, but to the communes, and the departments. It is almost superfluous to observe, after having faithfully given the substance of the memorial, that it did not extend either to the communes or the departments, but was expressly limited to those who were concerned in the murder of the King.—The passage on which all these assertions were principally founded, and which incurred his strongest reprobation, was that which described some of those regicides as being in a situation to be subjected to the law. Hence, too, he drew the most unwarrantable inference, that, if the Ministers agreed with Lord Auckland, the war would necessarily become a war of extermination, and all hopes of peace would prove fruitless, until a new form of government should be accepted by France.—He then moved an address, beseeching his Majesty to disavow the sentiments contained in the memorial, as inconsistent with the wisdom and humanity of the British nation, and derogatory to the dignity of the British Crown.

* Memoires du General Dumouriez, écrits par lui-même, p. 106.

The defence of Lord Auckland against this extraordinary attack was undertaken by Mr. Pitt, who declared his conviction that, for his general services, that nobleman merited the applause, and not the censure, of his country. He truly maintained, that the memorial contained no expression which could properly be construed as bearing the most remote tendency to the conclusions drawn from it. Lord Auckland's language he described as the warm effusion of a mind animated with a just abhorrence of those men who had perpetrated a deed which excited the general indignation of Englishmen, and enlivened with the hope that an example would be made of them. Sentiments of this kind were no other than what he professed to entertain himself, and what, he thought, every Englishman must entertain with him. He cautiously declared, however, at the same time, that he by no means conceived any thing of this nature a proper object of our interference.

In the whole memorial, he insisted, there was not a single sentence which implied any alteration of the purposes of the war, or which could effect it, either in its progress or its termination. Stronger terms of reprobation, against the murderers of Louis the Sixteenth, had not been used by Lord Auckland than had been contained in every address of that House to his Majesty, and in every answer to those addresses. But nothing, he contended, could be fairly extracted from it, which pledged Great Britain to make the internal government of France regulate the purposes of the war.—We were engaged in hostilities from principles of policy and self-defence. Europe was threatened with a political convulsion, which, if passively submitted to, would, at once, introduce anarchy, and a total change of the existing governments. But the impatience of France had left us no alternative, by a declaration of war before any hostile measure had been adopted on our part. The real cause of the war, therefore, was evident to every capacity, and the effect of it, he hoped, would be, that, with the assistance of Divine Providence, we should ultimately obtain indemnification for the past, and security for the future.

In answer to Mr. Sheridan's assertion, that a general proscription

of all, in the Communes and Departments, supposed to be concerned in the King's murder, was insinuated in the memorial, he observed, that to force such a construction upon it was unjust, ridiculous, and unsupported by any document whatever. With regard to the passage selected as a subject for particular censure, Mr. Pitt was confident that Lord Auckland meant no more than that, at a proper and convenient time, the regicides should be tried by their own countrymen, and, if guilty, suffer the punishment which they deserved. The idea was simply this, that, as a counter-revolution was likely to take place in France, by the desertion of Dumouriez, and the success of the Austrian arms, the persons principally concerned in the murder of the King might soon be in a situation to be brought before criminal tribunals in their own country, and be thus subjected to the sword of the law.

This explanation did not satisfy Mr. Fox, who resolved to draw from the memorial the same inference which Mr. Sheridan had chosen to draw from it, and he took this opportunity to express a hope, that, while contending with one species of tyranny, we should take care not to tolerate the adoption of another still more dangerous, by our connection with the allied powers, and a participation of their views. In his opinion, despotism was more formidable than anarchy; as the latter, in its very nature, could prove but momentary, while the former, by being more systematic, became more permanent.

It may be here worth while to enquire what that despotism was which the allied powers were thus accused of exercising towards France, and what those views were which the British Ministers were cautioned not to adopt? Happily for the cause of truth, the Prince of Saxe Cobourg, who commanded the Austrian troops in the Netherlands, had recently, in the name of the allied powers, avowed, in the most explicit manner, the nature of their views, in respect of the French nation. Immediately on the defection of Dumouriez, who had proposed to march with his army to Paris, to dissolve the Convention, to bring the regicides to punishment, to liberate the Queen, to proclaim the Dauphin King, and to restore the Monarchy, as established by

the constitution of 1789, the Prince of Saxe Cobourg addressed a proclamation to the French, in which he declared it to be the unanimous wish of all the Sovereigns who had been compelled, by the factious, to take up arms against France, and principally that of the Emperor and of the King of Prussia, who were yet filled with esteem for the French nation, so great and so generous, among whom the immutable principles of justice and honour were formerly so sacred, before the effect of the general overthrow of all order had deluded and corrupted that part of the people, who, under the mask of humanity and patriotism, had no other language than that of assassination and poniards, to put an end to the anarchy and calamities which convulsed the country, and to procure it the happiness of a constitution, and of a wise and solid government. The Prince avowed his resolution to support, by all the force which he had, the generous and beneficent intentions of Dumouriez, and his brave army. He declared, that if Dumouriez should desire the assistance of any part of his troops to join the French, they should co-operate as friends and brothers in arms; worthy of reciprocal esteem, in order to give to France her constitutional King, *the Constitution which she had formed for herself*, and, of course, the means of correcting it, if the nation should find it imperfect; and to revive in France, as well as in all the rest of Europe, peace, confidence, tranquillity, and happiness. He pledged his honour, that he should not enter France to make conquests, but solely and purely for the ends which he had explained. He further declared, in the most solemn manner, that if the military operations should require that any strong place or places should be delivered over to his troops, he should consider them only as sacred deposits; and he engaged, in the most express and positive manner, to restore them as soon as the government which should be established in France, or the general with whom he was to make a common cause, should require it.*

Here was a clear, full, and explicit declaration of the views which

* See this Proclamation among the State Papers in Rivington's Annual Register for 1793, p. 308.

actuated the combined powers at this period; and which sufficiently proved that they had no wish to impose laws upon France, but only desired to promote the happiness of her people, by enabling them to re-establish that constitution which they had framed for themselves, and which they had sworn to maintain, and to restore peace and security to Europe. Yet, these views which were suggested by a most liberal and enlightened policy, and which, after the multiplied aggressions that had been exercised by the French regicides, against all the Sovereigns of Europe, displayed a degree of generosity seldom to be witnessed in national contests, were branded, by Mr. Fox, as tyrannical, and deprecated as unfit for the British government to adopt!

The motion for the address was rejected by 211 votes against 36.—The subject, however, was revived by Lord Stanhope in the House of Lords, who afforded Lord Auckland an opportunity of disavowing, in person, the motives which had been imputed to him by those who seemed to tremble for the fate of the French regicides. His Lordship declared, that it had never entered his mind that they should be put to death, in Holland; he only meant that they should be kept in custody till such time as the course of justice should be restored in France, and that then they should be tried in courts competent to that purpose. Lord Stanhope's motion for an address, similar to that proposed by Mr. Sheridan in the Commons, ended in a vote moved by Lord Grenville, —That the paper in question was conformable to the sentiments of his Majesty, and of both Houses of Parliament, and that it was consonant to those ideas of justice and policy which it became the honour and dignity of the nation to express.

It will, no doubt be a matter of surprise to posterity, that such a deep interest should have been taken by members of the British Senate, in the fate of men who were the immediate agents of a government which had proclaimed war against every regular state in Europe, and had vowed particular vengeance against the Monarchy and the Constitution of Great Britain; and they will naturally be led to enquire into the source of such sickly philanthropy, and into the characters of the individuals who had excited such particular interest.—What deeds they

had achieved,—what virtues they had displayed,—and what merits they possessed! The four French commissioners, the objects of the patriotic solicitude of the British Opposition, were *Le Camus*, *La Marque*, *Bancal*, and *Quinette*.—Camus was bred a lawyer, and was advocate to the clergy, to whom he was indebted for the means of subsistence, and whom, after the Revolution, he persecuted in every possible way. He exerted himself, in the States-General, of which he was a member, to procure the suppression of the nobility, and of all the orders of knighthood, and the plunder of their property. In the month of December, 1790, he made a most seditious speech, in which he called upon the Assembly to *compel* the King to give his assent to the civil constitution of the clergy. Having been returned to the Convention as member for the department of Upper Loire, he proposed a decree, which was adopted, for the seizure and sale of the property of emigrants, and of all religious houses.

In December following, *before* the unhappy King had been subjected even to the form of a trial, this sanguinary wretch moved, that he should be declared *guilty*, and an enemy to the nation. He was sent as commissioner to the army soon after, and Dumouriez says, that he set off post, from Liege, to vote for the death of Louis XVI. *: but as, in taking down the votes on the 20th of January, he was declared to be "*absent on commission*," †—he must have stopped on the road.—It appears, however, that, "he wrote to the Convention, to inform them that he voted *for the death of the tyrant*," ‡ although he had not been present at his trial! La Marque was also bred to the law, and was member for the department of *the Dordogne*, both in the Legislative Assembly and in the Convention. He was one of the most ferocious of the Jacobins. On the 28th of March, 1791, he proposed to dismiss all the judges, because they were not sufficiently *patriotic*. On the 10th of August, he was one of the rebels, who attacked the King's Palace, and the author of an address to the people, calling on them to sanction

* Memoires, p. 114.

† Le Moniteur, ou Gazette Universelle, Dimanche, le 20 Janvier, 1793, p. 95.

‡ Dictionnaire des Hommes Marquaas, &c. Vol. I. p. 262.

this act of violence and treason. He voted for the death of the King, saying,—" *He is guilty,*—he was perjured,—he was a traitor;"—words particularly descriptive of La Marque's own character.

Bancal was a member of the Convention, and voted for the imprisonment of the King, during the war, and his subsequent banishment for life. He assigned eleven reasons for preferring this sentence to the infliction of a capital punishment. The chief of which were, because imprisonment and punishment were preferred by " Thomas Payne, the most mortal enemy of Kings and of Royalty, and whose suffrage is to me *posterity anticipated;*"* — and, because he considered the punishment of death as " absurd, barbarous, tending to produce a ferocity of manners, and one of the great causes of the evils which afflict the human race." But lest these sentiments should be ascribed to feelings of humanity, foreign from his heart, he added, that, as the punishment of death was not yet abolished, " I might, perhaps, vote for the infliction of that punishment at the conclusion of the war, because I think Louis Capet has deserved to die, and then the greatest danger will be past;"—but he thought that a different punishment would be most conducive to the safety of the Republic.

Quinette was a notary at Soissons, and a member both of the Legislative Assembly and of the National Convention;—he was a weak bad man; the creature of La Marque, whose principles he adopted, and whose actions he imitated, with the most degrading servility.—He voted for the death of the King.

These commissioners, then, were traitors and regicides; they had been guilty of a murder the most atrocious, all circumstances considered, to be found in the melancholy annals of a nation's guilt. Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan had concurred in the general expressions of indignant reprobation which had burst forth, from every quarter of the kingdom, on the commission of the horrid deed. They had truly and strongly characterized it as equally inhuman, illegal, and unjust.

* Le Moniteur du 20 Janvier, p. 100.

Could it be denied, then, that the men who had perpetrated this deed, were assassins of the worst species, criminals of the deepest dye, wretches deserving of the severest punishment, and whom it was the duty of every man to bring to justice? A murderer is the general enemy of the human race; his blood is the forfeit attached to his crime by the fiat of the Almighty; and no country, inhabited by man, should afford him a refuge.—The murderers in question were stamped with peculiar guilt; they had not even the unchristian plea of revenge to offer, nor yet the excuse of passion to urge, in extenuation of their infamy.—They were cold-blooded, calculating, metaphysical, philosophising, assassins, the premeditation of whose malice was the subject of their boast;—not men whose pitiful sophistry marked merely the perverted mind; but miscreants whose determined profligacy proved the corrupted heart.—Nor was their malignant rancour limited to one object; it extended to the whole race of Kings,* who were, therefore, called upon, in a peculiar manner, by a paramount principle of self-preservation, as well as by a sacred regard to justice, to put a stop to their guilty career.—Lord Auckland, then, only discharged an imperative duty, in exerting every effort to prevent such criminals from escaping the sword of the law. And it is a subject of regret, that there exists not some general law, some universal compact, among nations, for carrying into effect the denunciations of the Almighty against murder; for inflicting condign punishment on the murderer, in whatever country he may be apprehended, the moment the requisite proof of his guilt can be obtained. As to that spurious philanthropy, of modern growth, which, while it condemns the *crime*, protects the *criminal*, it is the bastard offspring of Philosophism, nursed by Faction, and reared in the School of Revolt.

At this period, the mercantile world were greatly alarmed by an unusual stagnation of trade, an extraordinary demand for money, and

* Robert, one of the regicides, gave his vote for the murder of his Sovereign in these words,—"I condemn the tyrant to die; and in pronouncing this sentence, *I only regret that all tyrants are not within my power, that I might condemn them all to undergo the same punishment.*"—Le Moniteur, ubi supra, p. 99.

the refusal of the usual accommodation at the Bank in the discount of bills. These effects were chiefly produced by a boundless spirit of commercial enterprize, exceeding all ordinary means of support, and calling for a supply of capital within the power but of few to afford; and by a sudden diminution of orders from the foreign markets. It appeared, however, on examination, that great numbers were effected by the immediate want of credit, whose real property was amply sufficient to meet every want, and to satisfy every claim; but as this property could not, with adequate expedition, be converted into money; such persons were unable to answer the current demands upon them, and were placed in a situation of equal distress with those who were really in a state of insolvency. Thus pressed, a committee of merchants waited on Mr. Pitt, to whom they represented the serious distress of the commercial world. Having closely investigated the subject, and being fully aware of the mischievous consequences of this temporary evil, if some effectual relief were not immediately afforded, Mr. Pitt introduced the business to the House of Commons, and a committee was accordingly appointed to take it into consideration.

On the 29th of April, the report was made to the House, which proved the causes of the prevailing distress to be such as have been above stated, and recommended the adoption of Mr. Pitt's plan of relief, which proposed to issue Exchequer bills to the amount of five millions sterling, to be entrusted to the management of commissioners, who were to advance it upon the credit of goods to be deposited in warehouses appropriated for their reception; which goods, if not redeemed before the first of May, 1794, were then to be sold. The interest to be paid upon the sums lent was at the rate of three pounds sixteen shillings per cent. The measure experienced some resistance from the Opposition, who readily ascribed the distress which called for it, to the war,—that fertile source of every evil, which seemed to associate itself, in their minds, with every measure of policy, and with every topic of discussion. It received, however, the sanction of the House, who passed the necessary act, in a few days; and the result established the wisdom of the application; for the relief granted fully answered every purpose; credit was restored, trade increased, and

commerce flourished, to the great improvement of the revenue; while not a sixpence was lost by the well-timed liberality of Parliament.

Mr. Grey, regardless of the admonitions of Mr. Pitt, in the preceding session, and deaf to the arguments which had been then pressed upon his attention, now brought forward his threatened plan of Parliamentary Reform. The various petitions which had been presented to the House having been read, Mr. Grey, on the sixth of May, moved that they should be referred to a committee.—He prefaced his motion by a speech of some length, in which he stated that the principal abuses which rendered the proposed reform necessary, were the partiality and injustice of the representation, from a comparison of the population in the different places represented;—the interposition of the aristocracy, the abuse of burgage tenures, and the undue influence of the Crown through the Peerage. He expatiated on these different topics, and strongly deprecated the usual objections to motions of reform, founded on the alleged unseasonableness of the time. He insisted that no danger was now to be apprehended from the diffusion of French principles; as no Britons, who were not bereft of their senses, could, after recent events, propose the Revolution in France as a model for the imitation of their own countrymen.—But, even if such danger were to be apprehended, the best means of averting it was the promotion of the comfort and happiness of the people, by the removal of existing abuses. Rejecting the conclusions of the disaffected in this country, who had considered Parliamentary Reform as a step advanced on the road to Revolution, Mr. Grey considered that the adoption of reform was the surest mode of preventing a revolution.—In these sentiments Mr. Whitbread expressed his hearty concurrence;—he denied that metaphysical opinions had ever produced a revolution, which always, on the contrary, arose from the irritated feelings of the governed at the grinding oppression of the governors. This was the language of Brissot, and the very principle on which he founded his notable plan for raising the *governed* against the *governors*. Mr. Whitbread contended, that the Reformation was not produced by the theories or speculations of philosophers, *but by the avarice and injustice of the Church of Rome*.—These were certainly the grand cause

of the Reformation, though they would have been inadequate to produce it without other concurring circumstances; and among the most prominent of these must be reckoned the spirit of enquiry which had lately pervaded the greater part of Europe, and the introduction of the art of printing, which had greatly facilitated the acquisition of knowledge. To the oppressions of the government, he also imputed the murder of Charles the First—the Revolution of 1688—and the American rebellion. But this assertion only proved that Mr. Whitbread had obtained but a very superficial knowledge of those events, two of which were imputable to different causes; and the other, the Revolution of 1688, though owing to the misconduct of James the First, originated in the dread, which it inspired, of seeing the injustice, and the superstitious practices, of the Church of Rome restored, and, through that Church, arbitrary power introduced.

Mr. Pitt took occasion to deliver his sentiments on a subject which had long occupied a great share of his attention, in an early period of the debate. He considered the question, being brought forward at that time, as involving the fate of all who had hitherto been so long protected by the British Constitution; nay, as involving the fundamental principles of every society, and of every form of government. The opinion which he had expressed in the late session had been confirmed by what afterwards occurred; and had even been strengthened by the petitions then on the table, and the motion then before the House. He had then considered the question as capable of producing much mischief, and likely to be attended with no good.—Such was the conclusion which he had drawn from experience. He had himself, on different occasions, proposed a reform, at periods which seemed favourable to his object, and supported by persons of the highest respectability, yet even then he had failed. Several, from a dread of the consequences of innovation, and from a doubt whether the advantages to be obtained would compensate for the risk to be incurred, opposed his views. If such arguments had formerly succeeded, what additional force had they last year acquired from the dreadful lesson afforded in a neighbouring kingdom? The scene of horror which it then presented, exceeded imagination, far short, as it stopped, of what

had since occurred. He perceived, within the bosom of the country, a small, but not contemptible, party forming, who aspired to more than a moderate reform; whose object, indeed, was nothing less than to introduce into England those French principles, which, from their consequences, he could not regard but with horror. He saw, therefore, that while none of that good of which a moderate reform might be productive was to be obtained, much danger might be incurred, and an opening afforded to wicked persons, to subvert that very constitution which he, and those who thought with him, were desirous to improve, only in order to preserve it; or, though the attempt to reform might not be attended with the total subversion of the constitution, yet it might lead to a state of confusion and distraction, which would, at least, disturb the enjoyment of existing blessings. He thus found the probability of good but little, while the mischief was of a size so gigantic as to exceed calculation.—And, upon this reasoning, even if he had rated as high as ever the advantages of a reform, and had seen a greater probability than had hitherto appeared of accomplishing it, he would rather have abandoned his object than have increased or incurred the danger. He would rather forego, for ever, the advantages of reform, than risk, for a moment, the existence of the British Constitution. Besides, he considered the necessity of a reform, in consequence of circumstances which had since occurred, to be much less than when he brought forward his original motion.

But how, Mr. Pitt asked, was the question argued on the other side? The danger which he stated was not denied;—but it was alleged, that this was the very time for a moderate reform, it being the best means to quiet violent spirits, and the surest remedy against ruinous innovation. No doubt, those who now brought forward the question entertained hopes of producing this good effect. He had learned, from their publications, that they not only proposed to guide the minds of the people, but also to be guided by them, and that they were resolved to give up their views if they should find that they did not meet with a pretty general concurrence.

Having taken this retrospective view of the question, as it stood in

the last session, Mr. Pitt proceeded to inquire what had passed since —And he here entered his protest against the prohibition to introduce the subject of French affairs, which he considered as intimately, essentially, and inseparably, connected with the question. Another year had now passed in France, disgraced with excesses and outrages so horrid, that they effaced the memory of preceding enormities, and left nothing more of them than the faint traces, and the image, hardly visible. The conduct of the French in all its circumstances, bore a peculiar application to this country; it presented the fruits, opening in due season, the legitimate offspring of those trees, which, under the specious pretext of liberty, had been planted for the purpose of destroying Great Britain and her allies. The French had disclosed a system of disseminating their principles, and of procuring proselytes in every part of Europe—a system which they had particularly followed up with respect to this country. Such was the case without; —what was the situation of affairs within?—Societies had been formed in this country, affiliated with the Jacobin Clubs in France; and though they had since assumed a different shape, they were then employed in the diffusion of jacobinical principles. In the pursuit of this object, they proceeded with a degree of boldness and confidence, proportioned to the success of the French arms. The Parliament thus beheld the scheme which they had anticipated, as the result of the new constitution in France, unfolding itself. They had more immediately, the opportunity of seeing what were the views of the Legislators in France in relation to this country, and what their instruments in England were endeavouring to effect. For, while in France, they always urged the pretext of a Parliamentary Reform, as the medium by which they were to introduce their principles; their instruments here always took care to connect the system of Parliamentary Reform with all those delusive doctrines, upon which was founded the newly-raised fabric of French freedom.—Nothing less than a National Convention was held out as a sufficient remedy for the abuses which prevailed in the representation, and as the sole organ through which a *more perfect form of government* was to be obtained; by which was meant, such a government as should acknowledge no other source of authority, and no other rule of conduct, than the will of the majority.

—In short, French principles were inculcated as the true standard of political belief, and the example of the French government was proposed as a worthy object of imitation.

Tracing this spirit of disaffection, and these proceedings, from their origin to the present moment, Mr. Pitt continued to observe, that the former, which had been thus raised, was happily kept under, and prevented from breaking out into action, by the seasonable interference of the Legislature, by the vigilance and exertions of the executive power, by the loyalty, vigour, and unanimity, of the people, and likewise by the interposition of Providence, in the turn lately given to affairs on the Continent, and the check experienced by the French arms. The admirers and supporters of French policy felt a depression of spirits from the defeat of their friends and allies, which, for a time, gave a fatal blow to their hopes, and compelled them to conceal their views, and to assume a veil of caution, but ill-suited to the ardour of their temper, and the boldness of their enterprize. But, though they had thus been forced for a while to relinquish their schemes, it was not thence to be inferred that they had by any means abandoned them;—no; they still indulged the same hopes, they still meditated the same plans, and only lay by to watch for an opportunity favourable to the accomplishment of their designs. For that purpose, they had looked peculiarly to the question of Parliamentary Reform. Previous to the introduction of the present motion, a great number of petitions had been presented to the House, equally singular in their form, in expression, and in the manner in which they had been submitted to notice.—They had been introduced under the auspices of Mr. Grey, by whom the motion was made.—They were of three descriptions, except that one on which the motion was more particularly founded, and a petition from Nottingham, conceived in exactly the same terms with one which had been presented from the same place in 1782. At that period, it came after a long war, which had harassed and exhausted the country, and the calamities of which it stated as a proper ground for a reform of Parliament;—unfortunately, it still employed the same language, and gave the same description of the country, after a long and prosperous peace. All these petitions came either from England or from Scotland, or from places in England and

Scotland, which seemed to have no natural connection, or likelihood of communication. Yet, coming from these different places, they were all the same in substance, and nearly the same in style;—whatever little difference there might be in the expression, they seemed all to proceed from the same hands——

-Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen; qualem decet esse sororum.

They all, it must be confessed, betrayed a strong family likeness. Almost the only difference was, that those from Scotland expressed their surprize at the immense load of debt, notwithstanding the extent of the taxes, which they stated at twenty millions—four millions above the truth.—All of them were the same in prayer; they concurred in praying for the right of universal suffrage, as the basis of that reform which they were solicitous to obtain.

Two questions arose on these petitions; first, what weight they ought to have with the House, and how far they ought to be allowed to influence their judgment?—And, secondly, whether that was a season proper for the consideration of the object which they claimed, and favourable to a temperate reform? On the first point, when petitions came to the House, fabricated in appearance, similar in substance and expression, it did not require much time to determine in what point of view they were to be considered. There was every reason to suspect, that they were the work of a few individuals; they had much more the appearance of such, than of the general expression of the sentiments of the country. If it were asked, then, what weight they ought to have?—The answer was easy:—None.—The fraud was too gross and palpable; and it was evident from what quarter they came, and with what views they were promoted. All the circumstances in France, and in this country, pointed out the present as a season unfavourable to temperate reform. The gentlemen who supported the motion, had been engaged in a society for the purpose, as they themselves stated, of allaying the violence of those who might be misled by a blind rage for innovation,—and of enlightening the people with respect to the nature of their true claims. Such had been

the objects which they had avowed at their outset; they had proposed to make a fair experiment, to allow the people of England a full opportunity for procuring a rational and moderate reform; and, if they should find that they could not succeed, and that the people should be disinclined to any plan of reform, and not disposed to prosecute the measures which they should recommend, they were then to abandon their purpose. They had now gone on, for more than a year, publishing, with a view to enlighten the minds of the people, using every means to promote their own influence, and, during all that time, they had not been able to make a convert of one man in England.—They had been obliged, at last, to come forward with a petition of their own, introduced to the House on the very day on which the debate was to take place. The other petitions, which united in the same demand of Parliamentary Reform, carried a suspicious and dangerous appearance. Ought they not, then, consistently with those principles which they had originally avowed, to have stood forth, on that occasion, to have acknowledged their mistake, and to have declared their conviction, that the people of England were not desirous of a reform, to have abandoned their object in which they feared they could not succeed, and to have joined in opposing a reform which was not even desired, and which could not be granted, with any propriety, at the present moment, or even with a chance of advantage to those for whom it was demanded?

Mr. Pitt next proceeded to consider the grounds which had been now urged in support of the question. It was stated that, from the general burst of loyalty, evinced by the nation upon the first alarm, there was no reason to fear, that the people would pass beyond the bounds of discretion; and that no season could be more favourable for a temperate reform, than that in which they had so strongly testified their attachment to the established order of things, and their reluctance to tolerate any change. Of this temper the House had been recommended to take advantage.—But how stood the case?—The fact, he granted, was indeed true; but it was also true, that societies, in this country, had been anxiously seeking, not to obtain reform, but to find cause for dissatisfaction; not to allay the vio-

lence of innovation, but to inflame discontent. Was it then from deference to that small party, actuated by such principles, and pursuing such a line of conduct, that the Parliament was to grant a reform; and not from respect to the great body of the people of England, animated by a spirit of the purest loyalty, and too much attached to the blessings of the constitution, and of the existing government, to wish to hazard them by a change? What then was the question at issue? It was the same question which was then at issue with the whole of Europe, which was contending for the cause of order, of justice, of humanity, of religion; in opposition to anarchy, to injustice, to cruelty, to infidelity. Mr. Pitt was persuaded, that ninety-nine in a hundred of the people of England were warm in these sentiments, were sensible of the security which they enjoyed for those blessings which flowed from our excellent constitution; and that, so far from wishing to touch it with an innovating hand, they were prepared to defend it against every attack. Were Parliament to yield, then, to the clamours of dissatisfaction and discontent, and to disregard the voice of satisfaction and gratitude? Were they, in order to gratify the caprice, or to soothe the insolence, of a few disaffected persons, to neglect the benefit of the common body? Were they at a moment of emergency, like that, when the great cause of all was at stake, to suspend their cares for the public welfare, and attend to the discussion of petty claims, and the redress of imaginary grievances? Were they, at such a moment, in order to please a few individuals, to hazard the consequence of producing alarm and distrust in the great body of the nation now firm and united in the common cause?—This would, indeed, resemble the conduct of those who, at the moment when their citadel was besieged, should proceed to the discussion of points of difference, rather than attend to providing the means of defence.

The next ground alleged in defence of the motion, was, that this was a time of war, and that, from the situation of commercial credit, the country was in a state of alarm and distrust. These Mr. Pitt regarded as very strange reasons for such a measure, and thought it rather unwise, while engaged in a war of defence against a foreign enemy, to hazard the consequences of any distraction at home. Then, adverting to the

state of credit, which he imputed to extensive commerce, he remarked, the embarrassment could only be ascribed to the constitution, by making the constitution the cause of that extent to which commerce had been carried. But it was with an ill grace, that this period, and this state of affairs, were urged as grounds for reform, by gentlemen who, in the preceding year, had stated, on the same occasion, the long duration of peace, and the high state of public prosperity, as their motives for calling the attention of the House to the subject. These were certainly novelties which required to be reconciled before such persons could make any pretensions to consistency of reasoning.

Mr. Pitt now went on to examine the precise nature of the motion itself.—Having supposed that its object was to refer to a committee of the House only *one* of the petitions on the table, Mr. Grey set him right, by telling him, that it was meant to refer them all. He then observed, that his reasoning on the subject would be reduced within a narrow compass. Could the House think of referring to a committee the consideration of the measure of universal suffrage? The motion having been made for referring the prayers of the petitions, generally, without pointing out any specific plan of reform, it was evidently improper to enter upon the discussion. This mode of proceeding had a tendency to excite discontent, without affording the means of allaying it. Mr. Pitt said, that, though he had himself formerly moved for a general enquiry, he was afterwards convinced, that it would be attended with no good effect, and he abandoned the motion. He became sensible, that there was no chance of obtaining any advantage, but by bringing forward a specific proposition. If he had thought so then, how much more must he be confirmed in the same opinion now?—If any object were proposed for deliberation, it ought to be a specific object. The contrary mode could only tend to perplex the discussion, and to render it productive of mischief.

Adverting to the manner of introducing the question to the House, Mr. Pitt gave Mr. Grey credit for having stated, fairly and candidly, that he did not bring it forward on the ground of right, but on that of expediency.—In this he concurred with him;—for, to talk of an

abstract right of equal representation, was absurd. It was to arrogate a right to one form of government; whereas, Providence had accommodated the different forms of government to the different states of society in which they subsisted. There was one right for a Roman, another for an Athenian, and a third for a Lacedemonian; but though the ground of general and abstract right had been disclaimed, the ground of expedience had been so enlarged as to embrace the mode of reasoning by which that wild theory was supported. Mr Grey had declared himself ready to adopt even universal suffrage — that mode which he approved the least,—rather than suffer the constitution to remain as it was. Mr. Pitt so far differed with him, on this point, that he declared he would rather abandon what he conceived would be the best plan of reform than risk the consequences of any hazard to the constitution, as it subsisted at present. Could he then embark in the same committee, with one who, while he rejected the only plan of reform, for which he had ever contended, was ready to embrace that which he himself deemed the worst? He avowed his alarm at the extent to which Mr. Grey had carried his object; and he could not help looking at the Society of Friends to the People with some degree of suspicion, in consequence of a letter which he had seen signed with that gentleman's name, addressed to the people of Sheffield. These people had so well benefited by those lessons of caution and moderation, which they received from their patrons, that they lately presented a petition to the House for Parliamentary Reform, conceived in such terms as rendered it improper to be received.—They early communicated to the friends of the people their plan for a Parliamentary Reform, by assembling a Convention of National Delegates.—What was the answer to this communication? "On the plan which you have suggested we do not think it yet a fit time to deliberate.—In a more advanced stage it may become a proper subject of discussion." No Parliamentary Reform would satisfy those by whom it was now solicited; they wanted not a Parliamentary Reform for itself, but for something else, to which they looked forward. They considered it not as the end of their wishes, but only as means which might lead to their accomplishment.

But it had been said, that by refusing this Reform, the House would act upon the same principle by which America had been lost. Mr. Pitt avoided the discussion of the means by which America had been dissevered from the parent state, but shewed that the two cases were totally different. In the one, specific relief had been demanded, and a definite object indicated, with which the applicants pledged themselves to be satisfied; in the other, the House was desired to give what nobody asked, and to those who declared that, even if it were given, they would not be satisfied. They claimed that which could be resolved into nothing but a deduction from French principles—that which was termed the will of the majority, the will of the multitude. Before the motion could be assented to, the House must be prepared to deliberate, whether it was right or not to grant individual suffrage? On that question, Mr Pitt declared he was not prepared to deliberate; first, because it required no deliberation;—and, secondly, because he had deliberated long enough upon it already. He had not been so inattentive to the passing occurrences in a neighbouring kingdom, nor had he been so unaffected by them, as not frequently to have taken this subject into consideration.

Mr. Pitt said, that his own plan went to give vigour and stability to the ancient principles of the constitution, and not to introduce into it any new principles. The merit of the British Constitution was to be estimated not by metaphysical ideas, not by vague theories, but by analysing it in practice: its benefits were confirmed by the sure and infallible test of experience. It was on this ground that the representation of the people, which must always be deemed a most valuable part of the constitution, rested on its present footing. In the history of England, from the earliest period to that time, the number of electors had always been few in proportion to the population of the country. His plan went to regulate the distribution of the right of electing members, to add some, and to transfer others; was he then, to be told that he was an advocate for Parliamentary Reform, as if he had espoused the same side of the question which was now taken up by Mr. Grey and his friends, and was now engaged in resisting that cause which he had formerly supported? Mr. Pitt insisted that his plan was as

contrary to that proposed by Mr. Grey, as Mr. Grey's plan was to the constitution; and he expressed his concurrence in the observation of Mr. Windham, that, to adopt the system now proposed, would be to adopt the principles of the French code, and to follow the example of the French legislators. As these principles were unknown in the history of this country, it was to France only that the House could look for their origin. The principle which claimed individual suffrage, and affirmed that every man had an equal right to a share in the representation, was the same which served as the basis of that declaration of rights on which the French legislators had professed to found their government. He reminded his audience that there were two hundred and fifty persons who possessed an equal voice in the lagislature with the House of Commons; that there was a King who, to the third of the Legislative, added the whole of the Executive, Power; and that, if this principle of individual suffrage were granted, and carried to its legitimate extent, it went to subvert the peerage;—to depose the King;—in fine, to extinguish every hereditary distinction, and every privileged order;—and to establish that system of equalizing anarchy which was announced in the code of French legislation, and attested in the the blood of the Parisian massacres.

The question then was, as Mr. Pitt stated it to be, whether the House would abide by the constitution, or hazard a change, with all that dreadful chain of consequences with which it had been attended in a neighbouring kingdom? If it were possible for an Englishman to forget his attachment to the constitution, and his loyalty to the Sovereign;—if it were possible for him to lose all those generous feelings which bound him to his country, and secured his obedience to its laws;—if it were possible for him to sacrifice all these to the principles which were brought forward to support a change of government; yet, if he would only attend to reason, he would find them wild and illusive theories.—He would find the principle of individual will powerful and efficient to the destruction of every individual, and of every community; but to every good purpose null and void.—He would find that those rights which entitled all to an equal share in the government, were rights which only served to remove them from useful labour, from sober

industry, and from domestic connections; and which abandoned them to be the slaves of every idle caprice, and of every destructive passion. The government which adopted such principles, ceased to be a government; it loosed the bands which knit society together; it forfeited the reverence and obedience of its subjects; it gave up those, whom it ought to protect, to the daggers of the Marseillese, and the assassins of Paris. Under a pretence of centering all authority in the will of the many, it established the worst species of despotism. Such was the state of that wretched country, France, the destestable policy of which had added new words to the dictionary, such as the phrases of municipalities declaring themselves in a state of *permanent* revolution, and the nation itself in a state of *sovereign* insurrection!—In what was called the government of the multitude, they were not the many who governed the few, but the few who governed the many. It was a species of tyranny which added insult to the wretchedness of its subjects, by styling its own arbitrary decrees the voice of the people, and by sanctioning its acts of oppression and cruelty under the pretence of the national will. Such was the nature of those principles which were connected with the right of individual suffrage; and it was for the House to determine how far it would give countenance to that measure, by referring it to the deliberation of a committee.

Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan were not satisfied with the Minister's explanation of the radical difference between his own plan of reform and that of Mr. Grey; and they accordingly persisted in charging him with inconsistency of principle, and versatility of conduct. They both supported Mr. Grey's motion and project; and Mr. Fox, in particular, justified his support, by the alleged inadequacy of the House of Commons, as at present composed, to the discharge of its important duties. He could, however, persuade only forty other members to coincide with him in his opinion of their own insufficiency, while two hundred and eighty-two concurred in the rejection of the motion.

The Session of Parliament now drew towards a close; legislative means having been adopted for the vigorous prosecution of the war, and

for the preservation of domestic tranquillity, and all other measures taken which the public service required. But Mr. Fox, seemingly intent only on one object, would not suffer the Parliament to be prorogued, without another effort to compel the Ministers to make advances, equally premature, degrading, and fruitless, to the French regicides, for obtaining peace. Accordingly, on the 17th of June, he moved an address to his Majesty, requesting him to take the earliest measures for procuring peace with France, on terms consistent with the justice and policy of the British nation. The motion was strongly opposed by Mr. Windham and Mr. Burke, both of whom expatiated on the danger, as well as on the impolicy, of dissolving the existing confederacy against France, and the folly and degradation of an attempt at negotiation. Mr Burke declared, that he, for one, would never consent to prostrate the Throne of Great Britain at the foot of the French Jacobins, or the French National Convention. The House, perfectly satisfied with the cogency of the arguments which had been advanced, both now and before, in opposition to Mr. Fox's pacific notions, called loudly for the question, but Mr. Pitt, having been personally alluded to by the opposition, felt it necessary to make some few observations on the general grounds on which it had been supported. It had doubtless been introduced on the eve of the conclusion of the Sessions, as a solemn expression of the sentiments entertained by Mr. Fox on the present state of affairs; and, therefore, Mr. Pitt was anxious that his opinion upon the subject should be unequivocally stated. He declared, therefore, without hesitation, that the motion was in itself the most impolitic and preposterous which could possibly be adopted, the most contradictory to those general principles which ought, at all times, to regulate the conduct of Englishmen, and the most unsuitable to those particular circumstances in which they were then placed. It was only calculated to amuse and delude the people, by holding out to them a possibility of peace, when, in reality, peace was impossible, and thus served to create groundless discontents and dissatisfaction with the existing situation of affairs. He then adverted to the objects of the war, and contended that not one of them could be secured by a premature application for peace.—He disclaimed all intention, before the war, of interfering

with the internal affairs of France: but, having been attacked, no pledge either had, or could be given, that such interference would not take place.—If, indeed, sufficient reparation and security could be obtained without any alteration in the revolutionary government, then ought they to be accepted.—But he certainly thought, that the best security to be afforded, would be the destruction of that wild, ungoverned system, whence had resulted all those injuries against which it had become necesary to guard.

Mr. Pitt next considered the practicability of making peace with the existing usurpers of the Supreme power in France; and he observed that, before a treaty could be concluded, in all probability, a change of men would occur, and a change of measures ensue, which might stop it in its progress; or, should it be concluded, the same cause might lead to its immediate violation. Should they treat with Marat, before the negotiation was finished, he might again have descended to the dregs of the people, from which he had sprung, and, have given place to a still more desperate villian. A band of leaders had swayed the mob in constant succession, all resembling in guilt, but each striving to improve in crime upon his predecessor, and swell the black catalogue with new modes and higher gradations of wickedness.—

> Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
> Nos nequiores, mox daturos
> Progeniem vitiosiorem.

No treaty, he contended, could exist on their good faith, independent of the terms of peace; and no engagement could be formed more solemn than that which the French rulers had contracted in return for the acknowledged neutrality of the British government, and which they had so scandalously violated.

Having shewn that the motion could answer no *good* purpose, he proceeded to prove that it was calculated to answer a very bad purpose—to discourage our allies, and to inspire our enemies with confidence. It was negatived, on a division, by 187 votes against 47.

On the twenty-first of June, his Majesty prorogued the Parliament, remarking, in his speech, that it was only by a vigorous prosecution of the war that he could hope to obtain the great end to which his views were uniformly directed—the restoration of peace on such terms as might be consistent with the permanent security of this country, and with the general tranquillity of Europe.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Affairs of France—State of that Country after the murder of the King—Character of Louis XVI. by M. de Malesherbes—Schism among the Jacobins—Brissot heads the Girondists, and Robespierre takes the command of the Jacobins—Advantage of the latter over the former—Extraordinary means adopted for reinforcing the Armies—Siege of Maestricht raised—French driven out of Liege—Discontent in the Austrian Netherlands—Dumouriez resumes the command of the French Army—Endeavours to restore Discipline and to check Extortion—Attacks the Austrians at Nerwinde—Is defeated with great loss—Again defeated at Louvain—Retreats towards the French frontier—Comparative force of the two Armies—Dumouriez opens a negotiation with the Austrians—His interview with Colonel Mack—His scheme for dissolving the Convention, and for restoring the Constitutional Monarchy—Mack insists on the evacuation of the Austrian Netherlands by the French—Dumouriez accedes to the proposal and withdraws his Army—Commissioners from the Convention order Dumouriez to repair to Paris—He refuses, seizes the Commissioners, and delivers them up to the Austrians—Publishes a Proclamation inviting all loyal Frenchmen to join him—Is fired at by a body of National Guards—Flies to the Austrian Quarters—The Prince de Cobourg, at his request, addresses a Proclamation to the French—Dumouriez returns to his Camp—Defection of his Troops—He quits the Camp and joins the Austrians—Is joined by 1500 of his men—The Austrian Commander recalls his Proclamation, and declares the Armistice at an end—His conduct justified—Causes of the inactivity of the Austrians at this period—Dampierre takes the command of the French Army and attacks the Allies—He is defeated and killed—Is succeeded by Custine—An English Army joins the Austrians—The Allies drive the French from the fortified Camp of Famars—Lay siege to Valenciennes—Vigorous measures of the Convention for arming and training the whole population of France—The Allies force the strong position of Cæsar's Camp—Division of the allied Army—Duke of York forms the siege of Dunkirk—The covering Army defeated—Siege raised—Quesnoi taken by the Austrians—The Austrians forced to raise the siege of Maubeuge—State of things at the close of the Campaign in Flanders—Operations on the Rhine—Mentz reduced by the Prussians—The lines of Weissemberg forced by the Prussians—Surrender of Toulon to Lord Hood—Superiority of the French—Evacuation of Toulon—Massacre of the Loyalists—Account of Ships captured and destroyed—Name of Toulon changed to *Port-Mountain*—Reduction of the French Settlements in the East Indies by the British—Capture of Tobago—Internal affairs of France—Struggles between the Jacobins and Girondists—Brissot's address to his Constituents—A true picture of France—Arts of the Girondists turned against themselves—Camille Desmoulin's answer to Brissot—His Birth, Character, and Conduct—His concern with the Massacres of September—

Means taken for the destruction of the Girondists—They are put under arrest—The system of terror established—Persecution of Foreigners—Mr. Pitt declared, by the Convention, to be an enemy of the human race—The right of assassinating him referred to the consideration of a Committee—Erection of a Revolutionary Tribunal—Trial and Murder of the Queen of France—The Dauphin consigned to the care and instruction of Simon, a Cobler—Vindication of the Queen's Character by the absence of all proof against her—Trial of Brissot and his associates—Interposition of the Jacobin Club to abridge the proceedings—Decree of the Convention for that purpose—The Brissotins condemned and executed—Trial of Camille Desmoulins—His blasphemous answer to the Judges—His Execution—Execution of Le Brun—Madame Roland—Barnave—and Bailli.

[1793.] By the murder of Louis the Sixteenth a deep stain was inflicted on the national character of France, which not all the enormities that followed that dreadful event can efface; and a lasting impression made on the minds of surrounding people which centuries of expiation and atonement will scarcely suffice to remove. The Monarch, whom philosophising rebels had consigned to the scaffold, was a just, a merciful, and pious Prince, abounding in virtue, but, unhappily, deficient in energy and decision of character: his faults proceeded from the excess of his virtuous feelings; his aversion from acts of severity, and his abhorrence from the effusion of human blood, led him to encourage rebellion by forbearance to adopt the necessary means of repression on the first manifestation of a rebellious spirit;—and to become the unintentional instrument of producing the destruction of millions, by refusing to sign the necessary order for repelling, by force, the earliest efforts of treachery and revolt. M. de Malesherbes, his venerable defender, ably pourtrayed the character of this persecuted Sovereign, and the cause of the Revolution which occasioned his death, in an eloquent burst of virtuous indignation, on receiving the fatal intelligence from the Abbè Edgeworth, who repaired from the scaffold to his house.—"And it was in the name of the *nation*," exclaimed the agonized advocate, "that the villains perpetrated this parricide—in the name of the French, who, had they been worthy of so good a King, would have acknowledged him to be the best they ever had,—Yes, the very best; for he was as pious as Louis IX.—as just as Louis XII.—as humane as Henry IV.; and exempt from all their failings. His only fault was that he loved us too well; thence conducting himself too

much as our father, and too little as our King; and constantly labouring to procure for us more happiness than we were capable of enjoying. But *his* faults proceeded, in some degree, from his virtues, —whereas *ours* flow entirely from our vices. He justly imputed the destruction in which the nation was involved, to that spurious philosophy which had invaded every class, and by which, he acknowledged, he had himself been led astray. It was that which had, as it were by magic, fascinated the eyes of the nation, and made them sacrifice the substance to the shadow.—To the mere words *political liberty*, France had sacrificed *social liberty*, which she possessed in a greater degree, according to M. de Malesherbes, than any other nation, because she had multiplied and embellished the sources of enjoyment more than any other nation. The people, conscious of being completely invested with the liberty of doing every thing which the law permitted, conceived that political liberty conferred the right of doing what the law forbade, and thence France was inundated with crimes. Intoxicated with the idea of their sovereignty, they imagined that, by overthrowing the monarchy, they should place themselves upon the throne; that by promoting the confiscation of the property of the rich, they should tranfer it to their own hands. Wretches who were most eager in the diffusion of such absurd notions unfortunately were sent, as representatives, to the National Assembly; and their first efforts were directed against their Sovereign.*

This is a just picture, as far as it goes; abstract terms unintelligible to the multitude, even more ignorant in France than in most other countries, had bewildered their imaginations, inflamed their passions, inflated their vanity, and betrayed them into the commission of enormities which their uninformed and perverted minds regarded as necessarily flowing from the new principles which they had been so industriously taught. The question, indeed, arguing abstractedly, was not precisely what M. de Malesherbes stated it to be,—whether the people of France were allowed to do whatever the law did not forbid? but whether the law permitted them to do what was essential to the enjoy-

* Bertrand's Private Memoirs. Vol. III. p. 279, 280.

ment of rational freedom? The conceptions of the people, however, he accurately described, as well as the consequences to which they led.—With equal truth he observed, that all the efforts of the traitors to debase their Sovereign had been vain. His steady virtue had triumphed over their wickedness.—Malesherbes advised Mr. Edgeworth instantly to leave Paris, and to fly from an accursed land, which could afford him no refuge from the Tigers, who thirsted for his blood.* But he vainly flattered himself, that his popularity would secure his own grey hairs from their rage—as if the fury of tigers would *discriminate!* —His attachment to the King was never forgiven nor forgotten; and, three years after, at the age of seventy-five, he was consigned to the scaffold, on a vague charge of conspiring against that *sovereignty of the people*, the evil effects of which he now so pathetically deplored; and his whole family was involved in the same sanguinary and merciless proscription.

After the death of the King, the division which had long subsisted between the different sections of the Jacobins, but which a sense of common interest, and the pursuit of one common object, had combined to conceal, became manifest, decided and avowed. The Girondists ranged themselves under Brissot, while Robespierre placed himself at the head of the rest.—The former were superior in talents, the latter in energy; and, in this stage of the Revolution, it was easy to perceive, that the men who would *act*, must speedily prevail over those who could *talk*,† but who could do little else. The Jacobins, too, had other important advantages over their opponents.—The bands of federalists, who had been called by the Girondists to Paris, to protect their persons, and to second their measures, had been sent to the frontiers; and the whole armed force of Paris, together with all that bore the name and semblance of civil power, remained at the perfect disposal of the Jacobins, who, intent on the removal of every impediment to the attainment of supreme authority, and unrestrained by any one

* Idem. Ibid. p. 281.

† Danton, one of the furious leaders of the Jacobins, emphatically observed, at a subsequent period, "*Il nous faut des travaux, et non pas des discours.*"

principle of religion, morals, or law, were fully resolved to employ it with effect, whenever a suitable opportunity should occur.

While the last grand struggle between these revolutionary rivals was pending, means were taken to strengthen the armies on the frontiers, and to provide for their subsistence.—All the male population of the country, between the ages of eighteen and forty, being unmarried, were put in requisition, and reams of assignats were issued for their support. After offensive operations had been unexpectedly renewed by the Austrian General, Clerfayt, the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg took the command of that army, improved the advantages already gained, defeated the French with great loss, on the fifth of March, in the neighbourhood of Aix la Chapelle, and drove them back, in confusion, to Liege; while the Prussians, under Prince Frederick of Brunswick, gained a victory on the same day, at Bruggen, which made them masters of the whole course of the Lower Meuse. Miranda, who, on the news of these defeats, had hastily raised the siege of Maestricht, was driven, by the Archduke Charles, from a position which he had taken for the defence of Liege; and the Austrians, continuing to advance, drove the French army, in a few days, from the Roer to the Dyle, and so rescued, from their plunder and oppression, the duchies of Guelders, Juliers, and Limburg, with the principalities of Liege and Stavelo.

These successes of the allies gave courage to the oppressed inhabitants of the Austrian Netherlands, who had experienced the promised blessings of French fraternity, in the violation of domestic privacy, in the plunder of their churches, in the subversion of their laws, in the destruction of their usages and customs, in the seizure of their property, and in a forced acquiescence, in revolutionary proceedings, which excited, at once, their contempt and their abhorrence.* Thus, when

* For a particular account of the systematized tyranny of the French in the Netherlands, see the very curious historical and political memoirs of the Revolution in Belgium and Liege, by Publicola Chaussard, one of the commissioners, sent by the Convention, to revolutionize those countries.—Some idea of the brutal manner, in which the feelings of the people were insulted by these agents of the French Regicides, may be formed, from the following note, addressed by this Chaussard to the municipality of Liege—"I present to you, magistrates of

Dumouriez found himself obliged to evacuate Holland, in order to take the command of the army in the Low Countries, he found all the people anxious to exterminate the French; while his own troops were scattered in every direction, and most of them had fled beyond the enemy's territory.

The first step taken by Dumouriez was to annul all the decrees, sentences, and proceedings of the civil commissioners; while, regardless alike of their entreaties, and their threats, he peremptorily ordered all the church plate, which had not yet been destroyed, to be restored; and, in short, did every thing in his power to repair the evils which had been committed.—After rallying the fugitives, he found himself at the head of fifty thousand men, besides as many more in the fortresses of Holland, which he still retained, in the different towns of the Netherlands, and on the frontiers of the Ardennes.—Well acquainted with the temper and character of the French soldiers, ever impetuous in attack, but feeble in defence, he resolved to lead his troops against the enemy. Having encouraged them, by some trivial advantages obtained at Tirlemont, and in the vicinity, about the middle of March, he brought them to a general action on the eighteenth. The battle of Nerwinde was long and obstinately contested; but the steady discipline, and cool intrepidity of the Austrians, under General Clerfayt, who was immediately opposed to the main division of the enemy, led by Dumouriez in person, at length prevailed over the superior numbers of the French, who were driven from the field, at the close of the day, with great slaughter. Four thousand soldiers, and a number of officers,

" the people, two free beings; they have promised love and marriage to each other; they wish " to ratify this promise, not at the knees of the priest, but before the sacred altar of the law, " THE ONLY DIVINITY OF FREEMEN.

" Magistrates, receive their promise, be the priests of nature. Marriage is a civil con- " tract, which, like all other acts, results solely from the will of the contracting parties. " The laws of France have, agreeably to reason, declared this to be the fact. You are French- " men by adoption, and the parties are French. Magistrates of a free people, bless, proclaim, " this union; and let that place, which has hitherto been the workshop of fanaticism, " become the sanctuary of philosophy."—P. 107.

In writing to his brother commissaries at Brussels, he announces this insult to religion as " a victory gained over fanaticism."

slain, with three and thirty pieces of cannon taken, were the reward of the conqueror, who, pursuing his advantage, attacked the French again on the twenty-second of March, in the neighbourhood of Louvain, and after an obstinate conflict, again defeated them with similar loss.

Dumouriez, being thus driven from his entrenched camp, on the heights, in front of Louvain, retreated beyond Brussels, while the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg continued to advance, and fixed his camp at a short distance from that town. The Austrian army, at this time, consisted but of thirty thousand men, a force very inferior to that of the French, notwithstanding their recent disasters, and their numerous desertions. It would have been highly imprudent, therefore, for the Austrians to advance further, until they should be joined by the Prussian division, under Prince Frederick of Brunswick, and by some battalions of infantry, and squadrons of horse, which were on their march towards the scene of action.

At this period, Dumouriez dispatched one of his aids-de-camp to the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, to inform him that he had resolved to put an end to all the calamities which afflicted his country, to restore the constitutional royalty, to dissolve the National Convention, and to punish the Parisian regicides;—and the General expressed his wish, that some confidential person might be sent to him by the Prince, to whom he could explain his intentions more at large. Colonel Mack, Adjutant-General to the Austrian army, was accordingly sent to Dumouriez, who had transferred his head-quarters to Ath, and encamped his troops behind the Dendre. There the Colonel had a private conference with him, to which were admitted General Thouvenot, Lieutenant-General Valence, and some other principal officers of the French army. Dumouriez opened the business, by observing, that he could no longer be a passive spectator of all the enormities committed in France, that he was determined to disperse the criminal Convention, to re-establish the Constitutional Monarchy, to rescue the Queen and the Dauphin, and to proclaim the latter King; but, in order to enable him to accomplish this plan with safety, it would be necessary that the Prince of Cobourg should engage not only to let him remain quiet in his

present position, behind the Dendre, but to afford him every assistance which he might require. Colonel Mack, aware that if Dumouriez's attempt upon the French government should fail, that General might return to the Netherlands, to attack the Austrians, observed, in a tone of decision, that the Prince of Cobourg would enter upon no negotiation whatever, so long as a single French soldier should remain in the Netherlands; and that, before any further proceedings were had, it would be indispensably necessary that Dumouriez should evacuate not only the open country, but also the cities of Namur and Antwerp, and the fortresses of Breda and Gertruydenberg, which were still occupied by his troops. Colonel Mack supported this proposal by an exaggerated account of the Austrian force, which he represented as capable of making head against Dumouriez's army, and of sparing sufficient to cut off the retreat of the French from Holland.—After a short pause, Dumouriez remarked, that the Low Countries had always been the prey of a single battle; that he had fought two, and had had the misfortune to lose both;—he would, therefore, consent to return to the frontiers of France, and to issue orders for the evacuation of all the fortified places without delay. In return for which, he was assured by Mack, that the Prince of Cobourg would not pursue him beyond the frontier, but would remain a quiet, though attentive, observer of his operations at Paris, until Dumouriez should require his assistance.—Dumouriez faithfully fulfilled his promise; he completely evacuated Holland and the Austrian Netherlands, and withdrew his army within the frontier of France.

The evening before Dumouriez left Tourney, he requested a second interview with Mack, at which he informed him, that commissioners from the Convention had arrived at Lille, bringing with them a decree of that Assembly, ordering him to appear at their bar; but that he meant to have the miscreants apprehended, and delivered up to the Austrians; after which he would immediately prepare for his march to Paris, his army being perfectly of the same opinion with himself. The day after this interview, Dumouriez withdrew his army into his two entrenched camps of Maulde and Bruil, and fixed his head-quarters at St. Amand, while the Austrians advanced to Mons and Tournay.—

And, two days after these movements, the four commissioners from the French Convention, with Bournonville, the Minister of War, who had accompanied them, were seized, and sent in custody to the Austrian head-quarters. Dumouriez immediately issued a proclamation, expressive of his resolution to dissolve the Convention, and to restore the Constitutional Monarchy, and calling on all loyal Frenchmen to join him.*

Dumouriez, however, soon found that the confidence which he had reposed in his army was groundless, and that his hopes of their concurrence in his views were vain.—Indeed, it is difficult to discover the grounds on which any man of sense and experience could place reliance on the attachment of troops who had proved faithless to their oaths, and rebels to their Sovereign. As the General was riding out with his staff, he met a battalion of National Guards, who had left their quarters, and were marching towards Valenciennes; and when he enquired whither they were going was answered by a discharge of musquetry, and, with difficulty, effected his escape to the Austrian frontier, where he joined Colonel Mack. Still he was unwilling to believe that his army would forsake him, and he imputed this accident, as he termed it, to the insidious insinuations of certain commissioners who had arrived at Valenciennes from Paris, and who had made the soldiers believe that he intended to sell his country to the enemy. In order to remove this impression, and to tranquillize the minds of his troops, he earnestly conjured the Prince of Cobourg to send him a number of proclamations, signed by himself, confirming the statement which Dumouriez himself had published of his object and designs. After remaining with Mack till three in the morning, he ventured to return to his camp, where he was received with every expression of joy; while Mack reported to the Commander in Chief of the Austrian army the result of this second interview.

The Prince of Cobourg did not hesitate to comply with Dumouriez's request, and the desired proclamation was accordingly forwarded to

* This proclamation, which is dated St. Amand, April 2, 1793, is inserted among the State Papers in Rivington's Annual Register for that year.—P. 303.

the General the next evening.* But no time was allowed to give it effect; for that very day the cannoniers declared that they would quit the camp, and repair to Valenciennes: their example was followed by several battalions of National Guards; and when Dumouriez called on the troops of the line to compel them to do their duty, these declared, that, although they were disposed to march with him to Paris, for the purpose of restoring the Constitution of 1789, they would never direct their arms against their countrymen and companions in arms. Dumouriez now plainly perceived that he was no longer safe among such troops, and he, accordingly, left the camp and the country, on the night of the fifth of April, accompanied by several generals and other officers. About fifteen hundred or two thousand troops of the line followed their general; the rest of the army hastily quitted the entrenched camps; and, while some of them threw themselves into Condè, Valenciennes, and Maubeuge, others fled in various directions, and returned to their homes. The Prince of Cobourg lost no time in occupying these advantageous posts, and in forming the blockade of Condè, which was ill supplied with provisions.† During these transactions, a Congress was held at Antwerp, at which the future plan of operations against France was settled; and at which Lord Auckland, the British Minister at the Hague, attended. As the late proclamation of the Prince of Cobourg was issued in consequence of the agreement entered into with Dumouriez, the moment that agreement ceased to have effect, by the inability of one of the contracting parties to enforce it, the other was, of necessity, released from all the engagements into which he had entered, and from all the conditions which he had subscribed. Before, however, the renewal of hostilities, the Prince of Cobourg issued another proclamation, on the ninth of April, ‡ announcing to the French the revocation of his former proclamation, and the cessation of the armistice. Thus the allied powers were placed, in respect of the French, in precisely the same situation in which they stood, previous to

* This proclamation, was dated Mons, April 5.—See Rivington's Annual Register.—P. 309*.

† This brief statement of facts relative to the negotiations between Dumouriez and the Austrians, is taken from an account of the transaction written by Colonel Mack at the time.

‡ Inserted in Rivington's Annual Register for 1793.—P. 309.

the commencement of the negotiation with Dumouriez. They had to engage an enemy, who had, without provocation, and for the basest of purposes, wantonly declared war against them, threatening not merely to lay waste their countries, but to subvert their thrones. Though the war was no common war, nor to be carried on by ordinary means, still, if the combined powers chose so to consider it, and so to wage it, however by so doing they might defeat their own object, yet would their conduct be sanctioned by every rule of justice, and by every principle of self-defence.

The allies have been inconsiderately censured for their inactivity at this critical juncture, when they might have availed themselves of the confusion consequent on the desertion of Dumouriez, to cut off the flying and insulated detachments of the French army. But the fact was, that the Austrians were so ill provided for any important operation, that they had not a single piece of battering cannon, nor even a sufficient number of troops, in the month of April, to undertake a siege; and they did not expect to receive either till the middle of May.*— They were, therefore, unable to prevent Dampierre, the successor of Dumouriez, from collecting the scattered remnants of the army, and encamping at Bouchain. With a due knowledge of the character of the French soldier, the new commander sought to encourage his troops by the renewal of offensive operations. On three different days, between the 30th of April, and the 10th of May, he attacked the position of the allies, between the Scheldt and the Scarpe, but he was defeated each time; and, in the last attack, on the 10th of May, he lost his life, and was succeeded by Custine, who was called from the Rhine, to take the command of the Northern Army.

The Austrians having at length received their long-expected reinforcements, and being joined by a considerable body of English, under the Duke of York, became assailants in their turn, and on the twenty-third

* On the eighth of April, Colonel Mack thus described the Austrian army: "N'ayant pas une seule piéce de siege, et rien moins qu'un nombre suffisant de troupes pour pouvoir l'entreprendre, et n'ayant pas l'espoir d'avoir ni l'un ni l'autre avant six semaines," &c.

of May, after an obstinate contest, drove the French from the heights of Famars and of Anzin, which they had strongly fortified, for the better protection of the important fortress of Valenciennes. The siege of Valenciennes was then commenced in form, while Condè was more closely invested. Subdued by famine, the garrison of this latter place surrendered on the 10th of July, and on the first of August, the commander of the former capitulated, and opened its gates to the allies.—The Republican troops, in the mean time, had made various incursions into West Flanders, where they gathered some plunder, but no laurels; being every where beaten, and driven back with considerable loss.

Undismayed by these disasters, and resolved to secure their ill-gotten power, at all hazards, the rulers of France had recourse to a desperate expedient for overpowering their enemies, the adoption of which at once proved the extent of their own authority, and the abject state of slavery to which the people were already reduced. They first seized upon all the church bells, to be converted into cannon, leaving only one for each parish; and afterwards, on the twenty-first of August, the Convention passed a decree by which the whole population of France was devoted to military purposes, and the whole country converted into one vast camp. Commissioners were sent into the provinces to superintend the execution of this decree, which was further enforced by every means which could inspire terror, or compel obedience. Five hundred thousand men, or rather boys, were thus raised in a short time, and were first sent into the garrison towns to relieve the troops of the line, who were forwarded to the different armies. As another means of securing victory to their arms, it was resolved to consider every defeat as a proof of treachery; and, in conformity with this resolution, Custine, and others, were consigned to the guillotine.

After the French were driven from the heights of Famars, they occupied the strong position called Cæsar's Camp, between Bouchain and Cambray, which, however, they evacuated in the most cowardly manner, on the approach of the allies.—The facility with which the French had been repulsed, probably, was one of the motives which induced the allies to adopt the unfortunate resolution of dividing their forces, and of besieg-

ing, at the same time, both Dunkirk and Quesnoy. The Duke of York, who commanded the division designed for the former of these services, began his march, towards the scene of his destined operations, on the eighteenth of August, and, after some fighting, particularly at *Lincelles*, where the guards, under General Lake, acquired great honour, arrived in the vicinity of Dunkirk, defeated the French force there collected, and sate down before the town. It has been supposed, that if, immediately after this defeat, the British commander had followed up his advantage, and attempted to take the town by assault, he would have succeeded in the attempt. Certain it is, that, at this moment, it was but ill-provided against such an attack; the garrison was small; no confidence prevailed among the troops; and all was doubt, hesitation, and fear. Ample time, however, was afforded for remedying these evils, and for supplying these defects.—While the necessary preparations for a formal siege were carrying on, the garrison was strongly reinforced, a resolute commander appointed, and a strong force collected for the purpose of attacking the army under Field-Marshal Freytag, which was destined to cover the siege. This force, led on by Houchard, attacked the allies on the sixth of September, and, breaking their line, compelled them to retreat; while the garrison of Dunkirk made a vigorous sortie on the besieging army, and were not repulsed without great difficulty, and no small loss.—On the eighth of September, the French made another attack on the covering army, which, after great slaughter on both sides, was ultimately obliged to retire to the neighbourhood of Furnes.—His troops being now exposed to a double attack from the garrison in front, and from the army in his rear, the Duke of York was reduced to the necessity of abandoning the siege, and he effected his retreat with great precipitation and considerable loss.

The Austrians, however, on their side, succeeded in reducing the fortress of Quesnoy, and in gaining important advantages over the troops which were sent to its relief. They then laid siege to Maubeuge; but the French, under General Jourdan, attacked them in their trenches, on the 15th of October, and, after sustaining a great loss, forced them to raise the siege. Various incursions were afterwards made

by the French into Maritime Flanders, but, unable to establish a footing there, they were compelled, once more, reluctantly, to retire within their own frontier.—The fruits of the campaign, in this quarter, were the acquisition of Valenciennes, Condè, and Quesnoy, by the allies.—On the Rhine, the Republicans were not more successful.—Mentz, after a long and obstinate defence, surrendered to the Prussians.—The French were driven by the Austrians, with great slaughter, from the lines of Weissembourg, on the thirteenth of October;—and on several other points, where they were the assailants, they were uniformly repulsed.

During these military operations on the Northern frontiers of France, the Southern provinces had evinced the strongest disapprobation of the new order of things;—and Lyons, Marseilles, and Toulon, had openly raised the standard of royalty. The first of these cities made a most gallant stand; and did not open her gates to the ferocious Republicans till four and twenty thousand of them were destroyed; and till she had lost the bravest of her defenders in the sanguinary conflict. On the ninth of October, the Conventional troops took possession of the city, and, in return for their heroic defence, murdered, in cold blood, thousands of her inhabitants. Marseilles experienced a similar fate: to avoid which, the inhabitants of Toulon invited Lord Hood, who commanded the British fleet in the Mediterranean, to take possession of the city and port, in trust for Louis the Seventeenth. His Lordship entered the harbour on the twenty-eighth of August; and soon after Lord Mulgrave took the command of the forces destined for the defence of this important place, and which consisted of British, Spaniards, Neapolitans, and Piedmontese.—Unfortunately, however, no adequate means of resisting the powerful army, sent to reduce it, were provided, and, after keeping possession of it for nearly four months, during which time the troops were greatly harassed by the incessant attacks of the enemy, it was finally evacuated on the eighteenth of December. Previous to the evacuation, however, eighteen French ships of the line, nine frigates, and several smaller vessels, were either destroyed or secured;—and it is extremely to be lamented, that, from a want of proper vigour and foresight, the total destruction of the port, and of all the vessels and stores which it contained, did not take

place.* Here, as at Lyons, the loyal inhabitants were butchered, by hundreds, in cold blood; Buonaparte, who commanded the artillery during the siege, under General Dugommier, is said to have presided at these barbarous massacres;—the Conventional Commissioners, in the South, Ricord, Freron, the younger Robespierre, and Salicetti, in announcing the evacuation to the Convention, observed, that their first dispatch should be dated "*from the ruins of Toulon;*" and the Convention passed a decree on the 24th of December, on the motion of Barrere, for changing the name of that *rebellious* city to *Port Mountain*, and for levelling all the houses which it contained with the ground; leaving nothing standing but the naval and military establishments. Pondicherry, and all the French settlements in the East, were reduced by the British arms; and the island of Tobago, in the West Indies, besides some other possessions of less importance, was likewise wrested from their power.

While France was thus pressed by her enemies abroad, she was a prey to much more formidable and destructive enemies at home.—The struggle between the Girondists and the Jacobins had become more serious by the revolt of Dumouriez. Robespierre openly charged the Girondists with being his accomplices;—and, though he was foiled in this attempt by the superior eloquence of Brissot, he renewed his attacks on other points, and, for some time, nothing was heard in the Convention but crimination and recrimination; and that Assembly, in fact, became an arena in which the battles of these political gladiators were fought. Victory was, at one period, doubtful; the Girondists had a decided advantage over their adversaries both in *arguments* and *facts*; and, by the aid of these, they succeeded for a while, not only in defeating every effort of Robespierre to persuade the Convention to bring them to trial, but in turning the tide of indignation against their accusers. In his address to his constituents, published early in 1793,

* The scene which took place at the evacuation of Toulon was most horrible; the Royalists, men, women, and children, flocking down to the harbour, and intreating to be saved from the fury of the sanguinary Jacobins;—Almost every ship was crowded with these victims of loyalty. One only disgraceful exception to the humanity, generally displayed by the British officers, occurred;—while all the other boats were filled with Royalists, *one* is said to have been stowed with *wine*, to the exclusion of the unhappy supplicants.

Brissot drew a true picture of France, after the murder of the King: he represented, in strong, but just colours, the tyranny exercised by the Parisian Commune, by the Jacobin Clubs, and the miscreants posted in the galleries of the Convention for the purpose of over-awing the deputies, and for destroying the freedom of debate. In short, he exhibited his country as under the joint dominion of terror and anarchy: "The laws without execution;—the constituted authorities impotent and disgraced;—crimes unpunished;—property of every kind attacked;—personal safety violated;—the morals of the people corrupted;—no constitution:—no government;—no justice!" Such was that stupendous monument of human wisdom, and of human happiness, which was held up to the admiration and imitation of surrounding nations, as it presented itself, four years subsequent to its erection, to the sight of one of its original founders!

Such was the unfortunate situation of this chief of the Girondists at that critical period, that every bold truth which he uttered supplied some damning evidence of his own guilt. The artifices which he then censured, and the injustice which he then condemned, were the very same to which he and his perfidious associates had formerly had recourse for the destruction of the Throne, and the deposition of the Monarch. It was not one of the least remarkable of the signal instances of retributive justice with which the history of the French Revolution abounds, and all of which should be preserved as pregnant with awful and salutary lessons to future generations, that the Brissotins were now destined to be fought with their own weapons, to be opposed with their own principles, to be foiled with their own arguments, and to be caught in their own toils! Camille Desmoulins, a tried jacobin, and a furious orator at the clubs, was the person to whom the task of answering Brissot's address was entrusted.—Nor could jacobin ingenuity have discovered a more fit agent for the purpose. Desmoulins, who had been bred to the bar, and educated at the same college with Robespierre, was a hardened traitor, who artfully contrived, in his harangues, to mingle a small portion of truth with an infinite deal of falsehood, and whom no consideration of consequences could ever restrain from the accomplishment of his purposes; who disdained remorse as the

puny offspring of superstition;—who enjoyed anarchy, and delighted in blood. His outset in life afforded a strong earnest of his future fame,—for the first speech he made at the bar was against his own father, whose prophetic spirit foretold he would perish on the scaffold. In a sanguinary paper which he conducted, he styled himself the *Attorney-General of the Lamp Iron*;—and he took a principal part in all the bloody scenes of the Revolution. He was first in the interest, and probably in the pay, of the Duke of Orleans, who is said, at one time, to have promised him, as the reward of his zeal, the hand of Pamela, who afterwards married Lord Edward Fitzgerald. He was courted, too, by La Fayette, at whose house he frequently visited. He was one of those who formed the plan, and regulated the execution, of the massacres of September; in a conversation with Danton, on the subject, previous to the time fixed for their perpetration, he observed, "The innocent shall not be confounded with the guilty; all those prisoners whom *the sections* may claim, shall be spared." And, after the horrid scene was over, the atrocious assassin remarked, with cold-blooded indifference, "Well, every thing was transacted *with all possible order;* the people even liberated many aristocrats!"* In short, Desmoulins vied with Robespierre himself for pre-eminence of guilt.

In his attack on the Brissotins, which was first delivered at the Jacobin club, and afterwards printed by their order, and circulated throughout France, he makes the following preliminary observation, "There is little candour in asking us for facts to prove a conspiracy. The only trace which memory yet preserves of the famous harangues of Brissot and Gensonné, in which they attempted to prove the existence of the Austrian committee, is the principle laid down in them, 'That, in 'conspiracies, it is absurd to call for demonstrative facts and judicial 'proofs: that in no time have they ever been obtained, not even in 'the conspiracies of Catiline; for conspirators are not wont to be so 'unguarded in their conduct; it is sufficient that strong probabilities 'exist.' If so, then will I prove against Brissot and Gensonné the

* This curious conversation with Danton is inserted in the *Histoire generale et impartiale, des erreurs, des fautes, et des crimes commis pendant la Révolution Française, par Prudhomme.*

existence of an Anglo-Prussian committee, by circumstances a hundred times stronger than those by which Brissot and Gensonné proved the existence of an Austrian committee."*

This *argumentum ad hominem* it was not easy for the Girondists to refute; but the Jacobins resolved to employ against them a more powerful instrument than the pen.—They justly deemed the poniard more secure, and they resolved to destroy, by murder, the opponents whom they could not subdue by reason. Insurrections were raised to alarm the feeble adherents of the opposite faction; the Convention itself was insulted and threatened; and, on the 2d of June, when the last blow was to be stricken, it was surrounded by a band of five thousand ruffians, inflamed with liquor, and further stimulated by a pecuniary reward of one hundred livres each;—to the clamours of these men the Convention yielded the required victims, and hastily passed a decree by which all the chief leaders of the Brissotins, to the number of twenty-two, besides the commission of twelve (with only two exceptions) the ministers, Clavière and Le Brun, were put under arrest: three of these, however, Ducos, Dussaulx, and Lanthenas, were, through the intercession of Marat, erased from the fatal list of proscription.

No sooner was the Brissotin faction thus crushed by the superior power of the Jacobins, than the latter gave full vent to their rage, and established, from one end of the country to the other, the infernal system of terror. On the 24th of June, another New Constitution was presented to the Convention, which was afterwards accepted by the people, displaying about as much wisdom as marked its predecessors, and destined to subsist for about the same length of time. Every refinement of cruelty, every extreme of vexation, which the ingenuity

* *The History of the Brissotins*, &c. p. 4. It was in this tract that Camille Desmoulins represented it as the duty of the Convention "To create the French Republic; to disorganize Europe; perhaps, to purge it of its tyrants, by the eruption of the volcanic principles of Equality;" p. 2. and admitted that the Jacobins "dragged a King of France to the scaffold, *because he was a King!*" p. 56. And, that "in the person of Louis XVI. they executed all Kings in effigy." p. 57.

of low minds, harassed by personal fear, and intoxicated with ill-gotten power, could devise, were practised upon the unhappy people, who were now doomed to be governed by the very dregs of society.—Domestic peace was invaded, and domestic comfort destroyed, by visits from the innumerable officers of the revolutionary police, at all hours of the day and night; while all confidence was annihilated, and universal mistrust prevailed. It seemed the business of legislators to invent new crimes for punishment, while they allowed all others to escape with impunity. To be *suspected* was to be *criminal* in the eyes of those new philosophers, who, with very few exceptions, suspected, and most justly, each other. *Aristocracy* was another revolutionary crime, amounting to nothing less than treason against the sovereignty of the people; and a decent coat, a powdered head, or the use of the proscribed terms, *Sir* and *Madam*, was deemed a sufficient proof of its existence.

While a more horrible tyranny than had ever yet been witnessed since the creation of the world was thus established over the whole people of France, by men who had ruined their country, in the name of Liberty, it was not to be expected that foreigners would escape the general proscription.—Englishmen were marked as particular objects of vengeance and oppression. Mr. Pitt was deemed worthy of peculiar notice.—To him was ascribed every evil which afflicted the country, and every defeat which her armies sustained.—He was boldly affirmed to be the soul of every popular movement; and to employ more spies than the revenue of England would have paid.—It was accordingly decreed, by a solemn resolution of the Convention, adopted on the motion of Garnier,—that *Pitt was an enemy of the human race.*—The members, however, refused to assent to Garnier's proposition, that every man had a right to assassinate him;—though they did not scruple to denounce the English government, in the name of outraged humanity, to all nations, for its base, perfidious, and atrocious conduct, in subsidizing assassination, poison, conflagration, and all other crimes, in order to promote the triumph of tyranny, and to annihilate the rights of man.—Certainly Mr. Pitt, by his able exposure of the mischievous tendency of their doctrines, and of the glaring infamy of

their conduct, merited their resentment; but, though their praise was sufficient to pollute the character of any one on whom it was bestowed, their hatred was incapable of conferring either honour or distinction on its object. But the ferocious governors of France did not confine themselves to vain resolutions and impotent threats.—In the course of the Autumn, laws were made, in virtue of which every foreigner was thrown into prison; and even the claims of those Englishmen who had hastened to regenerated France in search of greater liberty than could be found in their native land, and whose congratulations, on the success of the rebels and regicides of that country, had been duly mingled with libels on the governors of their own, were peremptorily rejected; and they were consigned to the same doom with those whom curiosity, business, or economy, had carried thither.

Early in the Spring, it was found that the ordinary tribunals of justice, though sufficiently pliant and complaisant, did not advance with rapidity enough to satisfy the ardent thirst for vengeance which the new executive government experienced. A new court, therefore, was established, which afterwards assumed the apt denomination of *the Revolutionary Tribunal!* Before this seat of iniquity, the unhappy Queen of France, who, since the murder of her illustrious consort, had dragged on a miserable existence, in the *Temple*, exposed to every insult, and to every privation, which brutal malice could suggest to aggravate the severity of her fate, was destined to be brought. In July, by an order of the committee of public safety, she was forcibly separated from her son, who was consigned to the care of the vilest and most desperate of the Jacobins, one Simon, a cobler, who took a savage delight in making him drink spirituous liquors, and utter obscene and blasphemous expressions. On the first of August, this persecuted Princess was taken from her bed, at midnight, and transferred to the prison of the *Conciergerie*, where the most desperate villains were confined.—Here she remained, deprived even of common necessaries, and treated worse than the lowest of criminals, till the fourteenth of October, when she was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Her trial, like that of the King, was a mockery of every thing which bore the semblance of justice;—not even the shadow of a proof was adduced

of any one of the charges preferred against her; every thing that was absurd was mixed with every thing that was atrocious;—the very appearance of law and of decorum was rejected with disdain;—and the illustrious victim, having been exposed, for a certain time, to the irrelevant testimony of the witnesses, and to the stupid and captious interrogatories of the judges, was consigned to the hands of the executioner. On the sixteenth of October, she was conveyed to the scaffold, in a coarse and dirty dress, seated on a tumbril.—She met her fate with the spirit and resignation of a Christian; and had the satisfaction to know, before she died, that her character had been completely vindicated from all the foul aspersions which had been cast upon it in the early periods of the Revolution; by the utter inability of her enemies to substantiate any one fact against her, notwithstanding the most diligent inquiry; and although they were in possession of the whole power and wealth of the state, to protect and to reward any witness who would come forward in support of their allegations. The Duke of Orleans was executed soon after.—He was tried on the sixth of November, and sentenced to die for conspiring against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic; almost the only crime of which he had not been guilty. He displayed great resolution in his last moments; but the universal execration in which he was holden, rendered his execution a matter of exultation to every description of men.

Brissot and his associates had remained, during this time, under arrest at their own houses.—Their party was still thought to retain sufficient influence to render their execution dangerous; but the Jacobins having, at length, by the complete establishment of the system of terror, confirmed their own power on a basis so solid as to secure it, in their apprehension at least, against any serious attack, they resolved to bring their humiliated opponents to a trial. In July, a committee was appointed, by the Convention, to draw up the articles of impeachment, not the least curious of which was that which charged them with an attempt to restore that very monarchy which they had, systematically, and, alas! too successfully, laboured to destroy. Even the murder of the inhuman incendiary, Marat, (who was stabbed by the hand of a young enthusiast,* on the thirteenth of July,) was im-

* Charlotte Cordaye.

puted to them. It was not, however, deemed safe to try them till the 24th of October, when one-and-twenty of the Girondists; namely, Brissot, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Duperret, Carra, Gardien, Valazé, Duprat, Sillery, Fauchet, Ducos, Boyer-Fonfrede, Lasource, Lesterpt-Beauvais, Duchatel, Mainvielle, Lacaze, Lehardi, Boileau, Antiboul, and Vigée, were carried before the new Revolutionary Tribunal. The ingenuity of these men easily puzzled the stupid ferocity of their judges; and, by their exposure of the folly of many of the charges, and of the fallacy of others, by pertinent questions, and apt remarks, they prolonged the trial, to the great amusement of the audience, but to the great disquietude of the Jacobins. The partiality with which the account of the trial was given in a print, supposed to be conducted by one of their friends, was made the subject of a formal complaint to the Jacobin Club, by Hebert, on the 27th of October; and the members *decreed*,—for they possessed, or, at least, exercised, a kind co-ordinate power with the executive councils,—that the reports of the judicial proceedings should thenceforth be limited to the *Journal de la Montagne*, which was composed by Chabot, the Capuchin; and that they should be revised previous to their publication, by some of their own body. The length of the trial, when it had lasted five days, exhausted the patience of the Jacobins, who openly complained, that the Revolutionary Tribunal did not answer the end of its establishment, since it proceeded like an ordinary court, and tried conspirators against the state, as it tried ordinary criminals.—In order to obtain the immediate removal of an evil so glaring in itself, and so hostile to their views, they applied to the Convention, complaining that the tribunal which they had created was still *subjected to forms dangerous to liberty*.—The obsequious legislators instantly gratified the wishes of the petitioners, and decreed, on the motion of Robespierre, that when a trial had lasted three days, the president of the tribunal should ask the jury if they were satisfied, and if they should answer in the affirmative, the trial should be at an end; leaving it, however, to the jury to declare that they were satisfied if they should think proper so to do, at any earlier period of the trial. This decree brought the trial of the Girondists to a close;—they were all sentenced to death on the 30th of October, though many of them were not implicated in the evidence delivered;

—and, notwithstanding their remonstrances on the iniquity of the proceeding, were all executed the following day.—Many other members of this party met a similar fate; some perished by their own hands; and others wandered about the land, like fugitives and outlaws, and either died from want, or fell by the hands of provincial executioners. — Their great enemy, Camille Desmoulins, did not long survive them; he fell a victim to the jealous and malignant hatred of Robespierre, in the ensuing spring;—and when he was asked his age, by the revolutionary judges, the miscreant blasphemously answered—"*The age of the Sans-culotte, Jesus Christ, when he died.*"—It was singular, that the crime for which he suffered was the same which had been imputed, *with equal truth*, to his great enemies, the Brissotins—an attempt to restore the monarchy!

Among the founders of the Revolution, who had essentially contributed to the deposition and murder of their Sovereign, and who now met the fate which they had, unwittingly, prepared for themselves, were the Ministers *Le Brun* and *Claviére*, the former of whom was executed without a trial, while the latter anticipated the executioner by laying violent hands on himself; *Madame Roland*, who lived and died a philosopher of the new school; and her wretched husband, who survived her only to commit suicide; *Condorcet*, the Solon of the Revolution, who died a miserable death, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, in a damp dungeon at Bourg; *Barnave*, who had applauded, with malignant pleasantry, the atrocious murders of Foulon and Berthier, and who was now murdered, in his turn, by the Revolutionary Tribunal, whose vile president, Dumas, he courageously branded, on his trial, as a *wicked wretch* and *an infamous creature*; and, lastly, *Bailli*, the first mayor of modern Paris, who, as Mr. Burke most truly predicted, was literally "*trampled under the hoofs of a swinish multitude*;"* for, on his way to the place of execution (on the 23d of November), he was subjected to the grossest insults, and most brutal outrages, of that very mob whose violence he had encouraged, and whose evil passions he

* Mr. Burke's sentiments on the conduct of Bailli may be seen in a letter to me, dated Beaconsfield, March 7th, 1799, and annexed to the second edition of my Letter to the Earl of Lauderdale.

had inflamed and flattered—thus paying dearly for his ingratitude to his deserted Sovereign, whose favour he had enjoyed, and whose bounty he had experienced.

Such was the state of affairs on the Continent, and in Great Britain, in the Autumn of 1793;—a new scene had opened on the political and moral world; a new æra had commenced, pregnant with events of the first consequence to mankind; and destined to unfold principles, and to exhibit transactions and conduct, at variance with the settled notions and established maxims of the best and ablest of our ancestors; and subversive of every tenet, and destructive of every institution, which the experience of past times, or the wisdom of the present generation, had consecrated, strengthened, and confirmed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

State of Jacobinism in England—Smothered for a time, but destined to break out with additional violence—The boldness of the Jacobins increases with the success of their brethren in France—The London Corresponding Society—Send delegates to different parts of the Kingdom—Rapid progress of disaffection—The doctrines of Jacobinism alluring to the poor and the idle—Cautious conduct of the Minister—Convention at Edinburgh—Their views, their objects, and proceedings—Adopt French forms—Meeting of Parliament—King's Speech—Address moved by Lord Cliffden, and seconded by Sir Peter Burrell—Eloquent speech of Lord Mornington—Acknowledgment of the French Jacobins, that they were the aggressors, and brought on the war—Speeches of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan—They impute the cruelties of the French Government to the despotism of the Monarchy—Falsehood of this imputation proved—The attack of foreign powers assigned as a second cause of these enormities—The enormities proved to exist before the attack began—Pacific disposition of France *asserted*—Her aggressive spirit distinctly *proved*—Mr. Fox abuses the Allies of Great Britain—Affirms that Louis the Fourteenth attempted to overthrow the established Church of England—This fact denied in his late History of James the Second—Disasters of the allies magnified, and their victories depreciated—Speeches of Mr. Dundas and Mr. Windham—Speech of Mr. Pitt; he justifies an interposition in the internal affairs of France—Represents the destruction of the Jacobin system as necessary for the peace of Europe—Impracticability of peace with the Revolutionary Government—Instability of that Government inferred—Reasons for the invalidity of such inference adduced—Negotiation with France, at this period, shewn to be impracticable—Mr. Fox's amendment rejected by a majority of 218—Address carried—Similar address moved in the House of Lords—Debate thereon—Amendment proposed by Lord Guildford—Ridiculous argument advanced in support of it—Negatived by ninety-seven votes against twelve—Motion of Lord Stanhope for acknowledging the French Republic—He pronounces a panegyric on the French Revolution—His ignorance of its history demonstrated—Declares himself a Jacobin—Can find no one to second his motion—Legality of the sentences of the Scotch Judges on Muir and Palmer, for sedition, questioned by Mr. Adam—His motion and speech on the subject in the House of Commons—His general principle contrary to general practice—His motion rejected by 126 votes against 31—Mr. Adam's motion for a revisal of the sentence on Muir and Palmer—Opposed by the Lord Advocate—Answered by Mr. Pitt—Rejected by the House—Third motion of Mr. Adam on the defects in the Scottish Laws—Negatived by the House—Discussion of the same questions in the House of Lords—Subsidiary Treaty with the King of Sardinia—Censured by the Opposition—Maiden Speech of Mr. Canning—His liberal notions of national policy—His masterly character of the French Government—The treaty sanctioned by the House—The Oppo-

sition complain of the increase of the army—That measure defended by Mr. Pitt—Mr. Pitt opens the budget—Taxes upon gloves and upon births and burials repealed—New duty on spirits, bricks, tiles, glass, paper, and on the indentures and admission of Attornies—Bill to prohibit the remittance of money to France—King's message to Parliament on the landing of the Hessian Troops—Mr. Grey's motion on the subject—Folly of discussing abstract principles—Motion negatived—King's message on the increase of the army—Legality of voluntary contributions for the defence of the country—Denied by Mr. Sheridan—Debates on the question—Arguments of Mr. Sheridan confuted by Mr. Pitt—Opposition accused by their late Leaders of favouring the views of the enemy—Splenetic invectives of Mr. Sheridan—Discussion renewed by Mr. Francis—Mr. Pitt's speech on the question—He defends voluntary contributions on the grounds of law, of precedent, and of policy—Taxes the Opposition with an invasion of the Rights of the Subject—Bill for carrying the measure into effect passes without a division—Motion of Mr. Harrison for the abolition of certain places and pensions, and for imposing a tax upon others—Injustice of such a proposal, and absurdity of the reasoning used in support of it—Proofs of the economical arrangements adopted by Mr. Pitt produced by Mr. Rose—Mr. Fox supports the motion, but opposes the proposal for taxing sinecure places—Mr. Pitt's reply—Motion rejected by 117 against 50—Bill for enabling the King to employ the French Emigrants—Opposed by Mr. Sheridan, who deprecates a system of retaliation—Justice and necessity of such system maintained—Mr. Whitbread objects to the employment of Roman Catholics who have taken no Test—Mr. Fox's speech—He prefers the Revolutionary Government of France to the Ancient Monarchy—Denies the right of interference which he had formerly maintained, and condemns the system of retaliation—Tendency of his speech considered—His insincerity proved—He is answered by Mr. Burke and Mr. Dundas—Mr. Burke defends the *Lex Talionis*—Bill passed—Marquis of Lansdowne's motion on the subject of peace—Rejected on a division by 103 against 13—Similar motion by Mr. Whitbread—Opposed by Mr. Pitt—Negatived by 138 to 26—Another motion in the House of Lords on the same subject—Rejected by 96 to 9—General Fitzpatrick's motion in favour of La Fayette—Opposed by Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Pitt—Rejected by the House—Major Maitland proposes an inquiry into the causes of the disasters at Dunkirk and at Toulon—Explanations of Ministers on the subject—Expedition to Dunkirk censured—Motion for an inquiry negatived—Subsidiary Treaty with Prussia discussed in both Houses—Extraordinary motion of Earl Stanhope—His horrible perversion of Scripture to prove Kings a curse upon mankind—The Lord Chancellor refuses to read the preamble of his resolution—Observations on the object and nature of the freedom of Debate, and on Parliamentary Libels—Lord Grenville moves to expunge Earl Stanhope's resolution from the Journals of the House—Voted unanimously—Lord Lauderdale's motion on the subject—Resisted by a motion for adjournment.

[1794.] The zeal, activity, and perseverance, displayed by the loyal associations, had silenced, for a while, the voice of disaffection, and had stilled the clamours of revolt. But where Jacobinism has taken deep root in the mind, it is not easily eradicated; and, though fear or policy may conceal the latent principle from general observation, or prevent

any immediate attempt to bring it into action, it will still continue to operate, in secret, and will, sooner or later, burst forth into an open manifestation of all its malignant and destructive qualities.—The British Jacobins, on the first successful exposure of their flagitious designs, had, probably by the advice either of their avowed leaders, or of those private friends, who, while they occasionally censured their violent proceeding, spared no pains to promote the success of their cause, assumed an hypocritical tone of moderation which their hearts disavowed, and sought to shelter themselves under a professed limitation of their object to plans of constitutional reform, totally foreign from their views.

But men, who were adverse to every principle of subordination, and impatient of control, were ill calculated to submit, for any length of time, either to the restraints of prudence, or to the shackles of hypocrisy. Their audacity seems, indeed, to have increased with the triumphs of the parent Jacobins of France, and every additional act of atrocity committed by the predominating faction in that wretched country gave, to their servile imitators in England, a fresh ground of confidence, and a new stimulus to exertion. The London Corresponding Society, which may be considered as the grand revolutionary planet of Great Britain, and the minor clubs, which may be regarded as its satellites, renewed their mischievous activity, and pursued their destructive course, without opposition, as without disguise. For some months, delegates had been openly employed, as missionaries, to circulate their pernicious principles throughout the Provinces, and to augment the number of their adherents. Delusive and visionary as their theories were, and easy as it was, to a cultivated and well-informed mind, to detect their fallacy, and to overthrow their sandy foundation, they contained certain abstract propositions, wonderfully alluring to the poor, the profligate, and the idle, who required no great eloquence to persuade them, that riches and power were the common property of every individual of the community, and that no man had a right to be richer or greater than his neighbour. It is not surprising, therefore, that these emissaries of Jacobinism, who were, generally, men of active dispositions, and sanguine minds, should make numerous converts to

their sect, or that the flame of discord, which had been smothered for a time, should break out with added violence.

Government, meanwhile, though apparently passive, was by no means inattentive to the rapid progress of disaffection. The Minister knew, that, by preferring judicial charges against the agents of sedition, without the ability to substantiate them by legal proof, he would only afford an opportunity to his political opponents to renew their invectives, and impart, to the disaffected, fresh confidence and courage. He wisely, therefore, resolved to let them proceed until they should supply such evidence as would convince the country, and satisfy a jury, of their guilt.

In Edinburgh, the seditious had proceeded to reduce their principles to practice, and had actually, in October 1793, holden that kind of *convention* which the President of the French Convention had so fondly anticipated in his answer to one of the English addresses. This meeting was attended by delegates from the London Corresponding Society, and from other societies of the same description in different parts of England and Ireland. The London Corresponding Society, acting with considerable prudence, restricted its delegates to its original *avowed* object—the obtaining, by lawful means, universal suffrage and annual Parliaments; but, that they might not be too much fettered in their operations, they instructed them, at the same time, to enforce the duty of the people to resist any act of the Legislature repugnant to the original principles of the Constitution, as every attempt would be to prohibit associations for the purpose of reform. The Edinburgh Convention adopted all the forms, names, and proceedings, of the French Jacobin Clubs, with such difference and omissions only as their peculiar circumstances rendered necessary. The members hailed each other by the Republican denomination of *citizen*; they divided themselves into *sections*, appointed committees of *organization*, of *instruction*, of *finance*, of *secrecy*, and of *emergency*; called their meetings *sittings*; granted *honours of sittings*, and dated their proceedings in *the first year of the British Convention, one and indivisible*.—They, at first, assumed the distinctive appellation

of the *General Convention of the Friends of the People;* but they afterwards took the name of the *British Convention of the Delegates of the People, associated to obtain universal suffrage and annual Parliaments.** They adopted means for assembling the delegates, at any time, when it should be deemed necessary, in consequence of any measures of precaution or coercion which the government might adopt, for the Societies to act, and they were fully prepared to carry their doctrine of resistance into effect.

When they were thus emboldened, by their increased numbers, openly to avow their designs, the government thought it time to interrupt their proceedings. On the fifth and sixth of December, the magistrates of Edinburgh repaired to two of their places of meeting, where they seized the papers, and took the secretary, and some of the leading members, into custody. Three of these were afterwards brought to trial, William Skirving, the secretary, and two of the delegates from the London Corresponding Society, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerald, before the High Court of Justiciary in Scotland, and being all found guilty, they were sentenced to be transported for fourteen years.†

Such was the state of the public mind when Parliament met, on the 21st of January, for the dispatch of business; and never did they meet at a more interesting period; at a time when more subjects of great importance pressed upon their attention, and called for their most serious deliberation, and their most solemn discussion; or at a time when every motive of public virtue, of genuine patriotism, more imperatively required an union of sentiment and of effort, and the sacrifice of every private, every party, feeling to the protection of that venerable fabric of the constitution which was now threatened with destruction, by the inveterate malignity of foreign foes, and by the

* *The Trial of William Skirving, Secretary to the British Convention, before the High Court of Justiciary, for Sedition.*

† Skirving was tried on the 6th of January; Margarot on the 13th and 14th of the same month; and Gerald on the 10th, 13th, and 14th, of March, 1794.

unnatural treachery of domestic traitors. Most justly did the King remind them, in his speech, that we were engaged in a contest, on the issue of which depended the maintenance of our constitution, our laws, and our religion—and the security of all. His Majesty briefly recapitulated the advantages obtained by the allies, in the last campaign, which had, notwithstanding the recent successes of the enemy, proved highly beneficial to the common cause. Our enemies, it was observed, had derived the means of temporary exertion from a system which had enabled them to dispose, arbitrarily, of the lives and property of a numerous people, and which openly violated every restraint of justice, humanity, and religion; but those efforts, productive as they necessarily had been, of internal discontent and confusion, in France, had also tended rapidly to exhaust the natural and real strength of that country. The King expressed his regret at the necessary continuance of the war, but remarked, that he should ill-consult the essential interests of his people, if he were desirous of peace on any grounds but such as might provide for the independence and security of Europe; the attainment of which ends was still obstructed by the prevalence of a system in France, equally incompatible with the happiness of that country, and with the tranquillity of all other nations. An attack had been made upon us, and our allies, founded on principles which tended to destroy all property, to subvert the laws and religion of every civilized nation, and to introduce, universally, that wild and destructive system of rapine, anarchy, and impiety, the effects of which, as they had already been manifested in France, furnished a dreadful, but useful, lesson to the present age and to posterity. It only remained for us, then, to persevere in our united exertions; their discontinuance or relaxation could hardly procure even a short interval of delusive repose, and could never terminate in security or peace. Impressed, as we were, with the necessity of defending all that was most dear to us, and relying, as we might with confidence, on the valour and resources of the nation, on the combined efforts of so large a part of Europe, and, above all, on the incontestible justice of our cause, we were called upon to render our conduct a contrast to that of our enemies, and, by cultivating and practising the principles of humanity and the duties of religion, to endeavour to merit the continuance of the Divine favour

and protection, which had been so eminently experienced in these kingdoms.

A long debate ensued on the motion for the usual address, which was made by Lord Cliffden, and seconded by Sir Peter Burrell. The justice and policy of the war were enforced on the one hand and denied on the other; and the French found in the British Senate more able, if not more zealous, advocates than their own Convention could supply. The defence of Ministers was undertaken by Lord Mornington, in a speech of considerable length, of the merits of which no brief analysis could convey a competent idea; it was delivered with great and impressive eloquence; but the beauty of the composition constituted the least part of its excellence,—for it was filled with the most accurate and interesting detail of facts, the luminous arrangement, happy adaptation, and irresistible strength, of which were admirably calculated to convey the clearest and fullest information, and to carry conviction to every mind that was open to receive it. Happily for the cause of truth, the contentions, which had already arisen between the rival chiefs of the French Revolution, had, by producing reciprocal criminations, supplied the strongest and least suspicious proofs of the injustice and iniquity of them all; and of the necessity to which their enemies had been driven, by their conduct, to take up arms in their own defence.—Of these proofs Lord Mornington made the best possible use.—He exhibited Robespierre and Brissot to the House in the act of accusing each other, for having produced the war both against the powers of the Continent and against England.* He shewed, from

* One of the principal charges against Brissot, on his trial, was "the proposal from the Diplomatic Committee, by the organ of Brissot, to declare war abruptly against England, war against Holland, war against all the Powers which had not yet declared themselves." During his trial, it was remarked by Chaumette, in the Jacobin Club, which was the real seat of government at this time, "Every patriot has a right to accuse, in this place, the man who voted the war; and the blood which has been shed in the Republic, and without the Republic, in consequence of it, shall be their proofs and their reasons." Robespierre, too, in his report, on the 17th of November, 1793, says, "With what base hypocrisy the traitors insisted on certain *pretended* insults offered to our ambassador!" Brissot, on the other hand, retorted on his rivals, "Who," says he, "has been the author of this war? The anarchists *only*, and yet they make it a crime in us."

their acknowledgments, that the war was forced upon us, and that, therefore, it was as unavoidable as it was just.—He proved, from the speeches of the leading members of the Executive Government, the malignant hatred entertained, and cherished with incredible pains, against this country, and the fixed determination to exert every effort to subvert her constitution, and to achieve her ruin.* He drew a correct and striking picture of the actual state of France, enduring all the complicated miseries which were the natural offsprings of the principles which gave them birth.—He insisted on the incompatibility of those principles, when applied, as they were, to practical purposes, with the peace, happiness, or security, of other states. And his Lordship deduced from these facts, and from these observations, the wisdom and the necessity of continuing the war with all possible vigour and exertion, as the only means of reducing the gigantic power of revolutionary France, and of ensuring a safe and honourable peace.

His Lordship was answered by Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Fox, who admitted his facts, but disputed his conclusions.—These singular politicians, instead of tracing the effects of the French Revolution to their obvious causes, could descry, in the atrocious acts of its founders, nothing but the consequence of a long established despotism, which had so far degraded and debased human nature as to render it unfit for the exercise of its rights when they were recovered; and, in their opinion, the *only* lesson which they *ought* to teach, was a ten-fold horror of that system which, in its ruin, as well as in its existence, was the

* On the 16th of October, 1793, when Saint Just proposed a decree for apprehending all the English then in France, and for confiscating their property, he concluded his report with this declaration, "We will give our friendly assistance to the people of England, in order to enable them to rid themselves of Kings." On the Evacuation of Toulon, Barrere exclaimed, "The day is not distant when the people of England shall recollect that they were once republicans, and that it was an usurpation which reduced them again to the calamitous condition of subjects living under a Monarchy." And on the 21st of September, 1793, on proposing the means of destroying the commerce and naval power of Great Britain, he observed, "Carthage was the torment of Italy, Carthage was destroyed by Rome; London is the torment of Europe; London is an ulcer which wastes the strength of the Continent; London is a political excrescence which liberty is bound to destroy; may England be ruined! May England be annihilated! Such ought to be the concluding article of every *revolutionary* decree of the National Convention of France."

curse of mankind. If there were any truth in the novel principle here laid down, it would apply generally to all nations in which a despotic government had been changed, by a revolution, for a free constitution; in all such cases, the same, or similar acts of atrocity, the destruction of property, the murder of the rich, the annihilation of religious worship, and the most boundless tyranny and insatiate cruelty, in the new governors, would be witnessed: but the reverse of this is proved by history to have been the fact. Did such effects follow the emancipation of the Dutch from the iron yoke of Philip of Spain? No, though the despotic government of Philip differed as much from the mild sway of Louis XVI. as the reign of Tiberius did from that of Titus; the Dutch Revolution produced no such consequences as flowed from the Revolution in France. The Swiss, too, when they shook off the despotic authority of Austria, disgraced not *their* country by acts of impiety, cruelty, and injustice. But neither the Dutch nor the Swiss, nor any other nation, whose exploits are recorded in history, promulgated such wild and visionary theories, adopted such loose and destructive principles, as the French, and, *therefore*, and not in consequence of the pre-existing form of government, was the territory of France polluted with the blood of its inhabitants, and its sanguinary rulers degraded by acts which have no parallel in history.

But, as if conscious that the cause which they had thus assigned, for these enormities, was not adequate to the imputed effect, these partisans thought proper to invent another operative cause of all this mischief; in the attack of the surrounding States, which, according to them, had goaded on a people, suddenly possessed of power, which they had not learnt to manage, into a state of fury and desperation.—But, it must be remembered, that the surrounding States were not the assailants, and the state of fury had existed before the state of war.—The ferocious spirit, which the principles of the Revolution were so well calculated to engender and to cherish, had manifested itself in acts of atrocious cruelty, and of treasonable outrage, previous to the declaration of war against Austria.—Antecedent to that period, they had perpetrated the cold-blooded assassination of Foulon and Berthier;

had degraded their nature by the public exhibition of the heart of the murdered De Launay, in the streets of the capital,—by their treasonable and sanguinary attack on the Royal Palace at Versailles,—by the *cannibal* procession which ensued,—and by numberless other acts of fury and of blood.

Pursuing the same line of argument, they had the presumption to assert, in direct contradiction to the most notorious facts, that there was not a party in France that was not inclined to avoid a rupture with Great Britain!—They accused Lord Mornington of endeavouring to prove that France was the aggressor, rather by words than by actions; though his Lordship had not made a single assertion, without adducing the most positive and satisfactory proofs in support of it.—They next laboured to fix the charge of aggression upon their own country. The hostile disposition of Great Britain, they insisted, was displayed in the countenance given to the treaty of Pilnitz; (to which, it has been already shewn, our Ministers gave no countenance nor encouragement whatever;)—in withdrawing our Minister from Paris, (who was accredited only to the King of France, and who could not have remained there, after his deposition and imprisonment, without affording the sanction of his Sovereign to the rebellious and treasonable acts which had reduced the unhappy Louis to that state;)—in the seizure of French property in neutral vessels; (that is, of property acquired in this country, in direct violation of an existing law;)—in the banishment of French subjects; (by an alien act, which is a domestic regulation, that every independent nation has an undoubted right to adopt, without accounting for its conduct, or affording any ground of offence, to any other power, and which Revolutionary France herself had adopted, without drawing forth any complaint from this country;)—in the violation of the commercial treaty; (which, it has been demonstrated, the French had themselves previously violated;)—and lastly, in dismissing the French Ambassador; (whose letters of recal had been issued by the French Executive Council, before he received orders, from the British Ministers, to quit this country!).—On this sandy basis, which had nothing to support it but their own groundless asser-

tions, they drew the conclusion, that the war was a war of choice on the part of Great Britain, and that it was a meanness in the Minister to call it a defensive war!

Mr. Fox seized the opportunity for abusing our allies, by observing, that if hatred of vice was a just ground of war (which no man had been so senseless as to suppose) we should not be at peace with any of them. He affirmed, that peace with the French regicides would be as secure as any which we had concluded with France at any other time. Was not Louis the XIVth, he asked, the declared enemy of our Revolution?—*Did he not attempt, by force and artifice, to overthrow our establishment in church and state!* *

The House was told that the armies of Austria and Prussia had shamefully fled before untrained recruits, and unpractised generals.—In short, no argument, and no assertion, were omitted, which could tend to degrade our allies, and to inspirit our enemies. Every check, which the former had sustained, was magnified, and every victory, which the latter had lost, was depreciated.—And the forced acquiescence of the French, in the tyranny of their government, was urged as a proof of the power and popularity of their rulers!—The leading members of the Opposition having, for some time, supported the administration, Mr. Sheridan made them the objects of his sarcastic remarks, which savoured more of envy and disappointment than of reason or of wit.—Mr. Fox moved, by way of amendment to the address, "to recommend to his Majesty to treat, as speedily as possible, for a peace with France, upon safe and advantageous terms, without any reference to the nature or form of the government that might exist in that country."

Mr. Dundas, and Mr. Windham, most ably combated the arguments of Mr. Fox. They admitted, that the mere abhorrence of crimes was no just cause of war, except those crimes bore directly upon our own safety;—but it was to this point, that all the reasoning,

* If I mistake not, Mr. Fox, in his History of the early part of James the Second, expressly denies, that the overthrow of our Established Church and the restoration of Popery, constituted any part of the designs of that Monarch, and of Louis the XIVth.

deduced from the character of the Jacobin government, immediately applied.—Mr. Windham commented, with equal solidity and acuteness, on the inconsistency of ascribing to the war the opposite effects of uniting the discordant parties of France in the common cause, and of goading them on to the commission of those savage cruelties of which they were guilty towards each other.

Mr. Pitt argued on the same side, and cleared the grounds of the war, and the conduct of Ministers, from the obscurity in which the Opposition had ingeniously endeavoured to involve them. He then took a brief view of the different debates on the subject of war, and re-stated his own opinion of the propriety of an interference in the internal government of France, as a means, not only of annoying the enemy, but of securing those desirable ends—a safe and permanent peace; and an indemnity for the expences of the war. Not that he had absolutely insisted upon an entire subversion of that government; he had always, on the contrary, asserted, that if a peace could be made upon terms of security to this country, no consideration of the detestable characters of the ruling men in France, or of the crimes and horrors with which they were sullied ought to influence this country to reject such terms.

It was laid down as a maxim, that, if a foreign country, divided into two parties, discovered hostile intentions towards another nation, it would be perfectly justifiable in that nation to endeavour to oppose those parties to each other; and, more especially, if the continuance of a system were the ground of that enmity, an interference, for the purpose of destroying that system, was perfectly fair. This principle, indeed, has been specifically maintained by Vattel, one of the most intelligent writers on the law of nations, and was expressly admitted by Mr. Fox, when acted upon, during the dissentions which subsisted between the Democratic and Stadtholderian parties, in Holland. Since the preceding year, it was remarked by Mr. Pitt, a new scene had presented itself in France, more eventful and extraordinary even than those which had been previously exhibited. However the horrors and crimes which had taken place, in former periods of the Revolution, might have exceeded all

expectation, and transcended even the utmost stretch of imagination, they now appeared only to have paved the way for fresh horrors, and accumulated crimes, beyond whatever fancy could have feigned, or fear conceived. Things had now come to such a crisis, that he had no difficulty to declare, that, while that system continued, peace was less desirable to him than war, under any circumstances of disaster which he could possibly imagine. Not that he would contend, that the mere abhorrence of crimes, that the mere detestation of character, could constitute any valid reason for engaging in a war, except, as had been truly observed by Mr. Windham, they directly bore upon our own safety; but, in the present instance, the reasoning of his noble friend (Lord Mornington) directly applied. That reasoning had gone—first, to shew the horror and enormity of the system which now prevailed in France: secondly, the danger of the extension of that system, if not speedily and effectually resisted: thirdly, the measures which were employed for the purpose of extending that system: fourthly, the prospect of success, which we derived from the very nature of those measures, in our attempts to check the progress of the system: and, fifthly, that the success of those attempts depended upon the vigorous continuance of our warlike efforts, and that the circumstances of the case were such as, in the present moment, entirely precluded all negotiation. Mr. Pitt defended Lord Mornington's speech from the attacks of those who had called it *declamatory;* upon what principle, he knew not, except that every effort of eloquence, in which the most forcible reasoning was adorned, and supported, by all the powers of language, was to be branded as mere declamation. The proposition which he had brought forward had been argued not in a vague and general way, but on the strong ground of undeniable facts.

The history of the rulers of France had been taken from their own mouths, from records written under their inspection, and from decrees sanctioned by their authority.—From the nature of their government, there could be no dependence on the characters of whom it was composed. The shifting of persons took place like the shifting of scenes on the stage; but the change of persons produced no alteration in the conduct of the drama; the principles and proceedings of which still

continued the same, or were distinguished in their progress only by increasing gradations of enormity. On the 21st of May, a new government, more dreadful in its character, and more fatal in its effects, than any which had preceded it, had been established,—this was the Revolutionary Government.

Lord Mornington, Mr. Pitt said, had begun his speech, by stating, that one of the leading features of this government was the abolition of religion. It would scarcely be maintained that such a step could tend only to affect opinions, and have no influence upon the conduct of a nation. The extinction of religious sentiment was only intended to pave the way for the introduction of fresh crimes, and entirely to break asunder those bonds of society which had already been loosened. It was intended only to familiarize the mind with guilt, and, by removing the obstacle of fear, to relieve it from the restraints of conscience.—Infidelity, as his noble friend had remarked, was only meant to go hand in hand with insurrection.—A second measure of the Revolutionary Government was the destruction of property, a precedent which tended to destroy all ideas of justice, not less than the former precedent tended to extinguish all sentiments of piety. Not less detestable was their conduct in their mode of inflicting punishments,—a mode which took away from the accused all privilege of defence, and from their trials even the appearance of legal forms.—And all these crimes they had managed to convert into sources of revenue. From the pillage of the churches—from the destruction of property—from the confiscation of the effects of persons condemned, they derived the means for conducting their military operations. They pushed every resource to its utmost extent. From these circumstances Mr. Pitt inferred the speedy destruction of the Revolutionary system, which had sent as many persons to the prison or to the scaffold as it had sent recruits to the field.

In answer to the remarks on the distinction which the French had acquired in the field, (where, however, they had frequently betrayed the most disgraceful cowardice, and had scarcely, in a single instance, obtained a victory, without a vast superiority of numbers, while they had been often defeated by a greatly-inferior force,) it was observed,

by Mr. Pitt, that their efforts were merely the result of a system of restraint and oppression, the most terrible and gigantic that had, perhaps, ever existed.—They were compelled into the field by the terror of the *Guillotine*,—they were supported in it only by those resources which their desperate situation afforded; and, in these circumstances, what could be the dependance on the steadiness of their operations, or what rational prospect could there be of the permanence of their exertions?—On that ground, it was contended that the more monstrous and terrible the system had become, the greater was the probability that it would be speedily overthrown. From the nature of the mind of man, and the necessary progress of human affairs, the impossibility was inferred that such a system could be of long duration; and surely no event could be looked for more desirable than the destruction of a system which existed to the misery of France, and to the terror of Europe.

Mr. Pitt here reasoned on the ground of experience, and on the nature of the human mind, which, in the ordinary affairs of individuals, or of nations, supply the best criterion by which to form a judgment of future events. But the French Revolution, as it was founded on new and visionary principles, and was brought about by means unparalleled in the annals of civilized states, so was it destined to baffle the efforts of reason, and the deductions of experience, when applied to ascertain the course which it would describe, in its destructive progress, to define its limits, or to mark its end. Certainly there was much of solidity in this argument, considered abstractedly; and, if applied to any other people than the French, and to any other event than their Revolution, the result would, most probably, have sanctioned the conclusions of the speaker. But the system of terror, now established in France, presented a new subject for contemplation to the statesman.—In vain would he search history for an example to direct his judgment, or to assist his opinion, respecting it;—exercising the most absolute controul over the body, it expelled every passion, every sentiment, and every feeling, from the mind, but fear;—its operation was, at once, most irregular and most terrible; and its consequences, it was as difficult to anticipate as it was to avert.

As to the question, whether he was ever to make peace with the Jacobins, Mr. Pitt said it was difficult to answer, nor could it be either prudent or rational in him to give it any specific answer at that moment. It was a question, the solution of which must depend upon a combination of events. As circumstances varied, a different line of conduct must, of necessity, be pursued; and it would be very unwise to bind up his discretion, to act with regard to those contingencies which might arise, by pledging himself at present to the adoption of any one set of measures. Under the actual circumstances of the times, he had no hesitation to declare, that he would rather choose to persevere in the war, even amidst the worst disasters, and should deem such conduct much more safe and honourable, than to conclude a peace with the ruling powers in France, while acting on their present system. He went still further, and declared, in the most unequivocal manner, that the moment would never come when he should not think any alternative preferable to that of making peace with France under such circumstances. The motion of Mr. Fox was certainly couched in very general terms, and such as might comprehend every thing for which Mr. Pitt had contended. It recommended to his Majesty to conclude a peace whenever it could be done upon safe and advantageous terms, without any reference to the nature and form of government which might exist in France. Mr. Pitt was also of opinion, that a safe and advantageous peace ought to be concluded, but that the security and benefits of that peace must depend upon the establishment of a government essentially different from the present. But though the motion was calculated to attain no precise object, it was nevertheless capable of doing much mischief. It meant and said, that the House of Commons entertained sentiments different from those expressed in his Majesty's speech. It held out to our allies that they were no longer to consider us as eager to support their cause, or as acting upon the principles upon which we embarked along with them; while it must impart encouragement and confidence to our enemies.

Adverting to Mr. Fox's assertion, that a treaty with Robespierre and his associates would afford as much security for the continuance of peace, as had been derived from the treaties of Ryswick and Utrecht;

and that as much dependence might be placed in the good faith of the Revolutionary government as on that of Louis XIV, Mr. Pitt expressly denied it.—He affirmed, that had that King even succeeded in his ambitious projects to their full extent, what would then have been suffered might have been considered as a deliverance, compared with the necessary consequences of the success of the Revolutionary system. All the splendour of his court, all the abilities of his generals, the discipline of his armies, and all the great exertions which he was enabled to make, proceeded from a high sentiment of honour. The exercise of that power which he possessed, however directed to the purposes of his ambition, was regulated by certain principles, and limited within certain bounds.—No such principles actuated,—no such bounds restricted, the conduct of the French rulers of the present day. They had contrived to banish all restraints, and, with an ambition more insatiable, they had, at their disposal, means of destruction much more formidable than that monarch ever possessed in the plenitude of his power.

It was declared by Mr. Pitt, that he by no means attached the same degree of importance to the restoration of monarchy in France, as to the destruction of the Jacobin system. He attached importance to the former, from an opinion that, in the present state of France, some settled form of government should take place, in which the greater part of the people might be disposed to concur. The ancient government he considered as affording the best materials upon which they could work, in introducing any change into the fabric of their constitution. Besides, as he had thought it incumbent upon him, in any proposed interference with the internal affairs of that country, to consult chiefly the happiness of the people, monarchy appeared to him the best calculated to promote their true interests. In another respect, he had been misrepresented, in having imputed to him the statement that the restitution of monarchy was an event which must necessarily be preceded by the conquest of France. He considered monarchy only as the standard under which the people of France might be united, the more especially as it was that form of government which Lord Mornington had proved to be most agreeable to the wishes of two-thirds of

the inhabitants.—But it had been said, that even the re-establishment of royalty would afford us no additional security for the permanence of peace, and that the French would still be equally formidable to this country. It was, however, a wild and extravagant assertion that the monarchy of France, stripped, as it would be then, of much of its power, and diminished in its revenues, would be as formidable as a system which had proved itself to be more dangerous than monarchy ever had been in the fulness of its power, and in the height of its greatness.

Towards the conclusion of his speech, Mr. Pitt pressed upon the attention of the House one part of Lord Mornington's argument, relating to a point which, in his opinion, precluded the possibility of treating with France for a peace at that moment. A decree had been passed by the Convention, by which every one was forbidden to treat with any enemy while they remained in the territories of the Republic; and on the 11th of April it was again decreed, that those persons should be punished with death who should propose to treat with any power, which should not have previously acknowledged the independence of the French nation, and the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, founded upon liberty and equality.

Thus, by any proposal to treat, the nation would not only incur the disgrace of the most abject humiliation, but absolutely put itself at the mercy of the enemy, and subject itself to the necessity of receiving any terms which they might be disposed to dictate. Were we then to withdraw our armies, to deprive ourselves of the co-operation of our allies, to forego all our acquisitions, to give up Condé, Quesnoy, Valenciennes, Tobago, Fort Louis, and all the factories in the East? Were we to abandon all these acquisitions, the rewards of our past labours, and the pledges of our future success? Should we consent to do all this, should we even hasten to send an ambassador to treat with the Convention, (and Mr. Fox had, on a former occasion, volunteered himself for that service,) we must not only acknowledge the unity and indivisibility of the French Republic, but must do so in the way prescribed by themselves. We must acknowledge it as founded on liberty and

equality;—we must subscribe to the whole of their code,—and, by that act, sanction the deposition of their Sovereign and the annihilation of their legislature. It might be said, that they would not insist upon all this to its full extent; but Mr. Pitt professed to have but little confidence in them, when he compared their past declarations with their conduct. To whatever pitch of extravagance they might have reached in what they had said, they had always outstripped it by what they had done. The absurdity of their expressions had, in every instance, been surpassed by the violence of their actions; nor could any hopes of more moderation be derived from any change of parties. In all the Revolutions which had hitherto taken place, the first recommendation to favour had been hostility to England. The most violent party had invariably predominated. The leading feature in their present character was a spirit of military enterprise, not exerted for the purposes of ambition, but every where spreading, in its progress, terror and desolation. We were called, in the present age, to witness the political and moral phenomenon of a mighty and civilized people, transformed into an artificial horde of banditti, throwing off all the restraints which have influenced men in social life, displaying a savage valour directed by a sanguinary spirit, forming rapine and destruction into a system, and perverting, to their detestable purposes, all the talents and ingenuity which they derived from their advanced stage of civilization, all the refinements of art, and all the discoveries of science. We beheld them uniting the utmost savageness and ferocity of design with the most consummate contrivance and skill in execution, and seemingly engaged in no less than a conspiracy to exterminate, from the face of the earth, all honour, humanity, justice, and religion. In that state of things, there could be no question but to resist, where resistance could alone be effectual, till such time as, by the blessings of Providence upon our endeavours, we should have secured the independence of this country, and the general interests of Europe. The House concurring in these sentiments, Mr. Fox's amendment was rejected by a majority of two hundred and eighteen, and the original address adopted.

A similar address was moved in the House of Lords by Lord Stair, and seconded by Lord Auckland; it was opposed on the same grounds

on which it had been opposed in the Lower House, by the Earls of Guildford, Derby, Stanhope, and Lauderdale; the Duke of Norfolk, and the Marquis of Lansdowne. Lord Guildford moved an amendment similar, in substance, and nearly so in words, to that moved by Mr. Fox, which was supported by those peers, and successfully opposed by the Duke of Portland, Marquis Townshend, Lords Spencer, Coventry, Kinnoul, Mansfield, Hardwicke, Abingdon, Carlisle, and Grenville. The line of argument pursued was, of necessity, the same as in the House of Commons, and was supported with great dignity and eloquence. But one argument was used by the Opposition too ridiculous to be passed over by the historian without some notice.—It was urged as a proof of the existence of a solid government in France, that the French armies had obtained victories in the field:—and General Wurmser, the Duke of Brunswick, the King of Prussia, Lord Hood, Sir Gilbert Elliot, the Royalists in La Vendeè, and the Lyonnese, were seriously called upon to witness the truth of this assertion. With equal reason might it be alleged, that a band of successful robbers, who way-laid every traveller, plundered them of their effects, and deprived many of them of their lives, afforded a demonstration of the existence of a fixed and admirable code of criminal jurisprudence in the country which they infested. But there is nothing too low to which the spirit of party will not descend. To the honour of the House of Peers be it recorded, that the amendment, so supported, was rejected by ninety-seven votes against *twelve*. A few days after this singular discussion, Earl Stanhope moved an address to his Majesty, beseeching him to acknowledge the French Republic! Every thing which the French Revolutionists had done was panegyrized by this British senator, who, with ignorance equal to his audacity, dared to defend them against the charge of Atheism, though the French openly gloried in the fact, and insisted that the priests and nobles were most infected with it.* Nobody appearing to second the motion, it occa-

* Neither this, nor any other assertion, however preposterous, and however contrary to fact, can appear extraordinary, when advanced by a man, who, forgetful of his rank in society, and of the duties attached to the situation and character of a British Senator, could publicly boast, in the Senate, that he was a *Jacobin*, and "a correspondent not of Mr. but of *Citoyen* Condorcet." *Parliamentary Debates, May 2*, 1794.

sioned but little remark.—Some few just animadversions, however, were made on it, particularly by Lord Abingdon, who truly observed that Lord Stanhope's speech required no other answer than a horse-laugh.

The trials which had taken place in Scotland, particularly those of Mr. Muir, and the Reverend Fysche Palmer, the former a Scotch barrister, and the latter an *Unitarian* preacher at Dundee,* who had been convicted of sedition in the autumn of 1793, and sentenced to transportation, excited considerable alarm among their friends and associates in England, and attracted the attention even of some members of the British Senate, who professed to condemn their conduct, while they deplored their fate. Mr. Adam, a barrister of some eminence, had given notice, early in the session, of his intention to move for permission to bring in a bill for subjecting the sentences of the Scotch judges, in criminal cases, to an appeal to the British House of Lords;—and he accordingly brought forward the question, in the House of Commons, on the 4th of February.—In this discussion, which he conducted with great ability, Mr. Adam laboured to establish two points;—first, the illegality of the judgment pronounced on the convicted parties; and, secondly, the necessity of an appeal, in all criminal cases. In arguing the last of these points on the motion for leave to bring in the bill of appeal, he laid it down as a general principle, which pervaded the whole system of judicial polity, both in England and Scotland, that *the decision of no court should be final where the business originated.* But never was assertion more incorrect; by many penal statutes, the power of decision without appeal is vested in magistrates out of sessions; the sentences of the quarter sessions, in most criminal cases, are final, though the proceedings may, before trial, be removed, by *certiorari*, to a superior court. No appeal lies from the sentences of judges of assize, in criminal processes, unless where a doubt arises on the construction of a law, and the judge himself specially reserves the point for the opinion of his brethren; and in all cases of impeach-

* Mr. Palmer was an English clergyman, of a respectable family in Bedfordshire, and, at this time, was fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge. In consequence of his trial and conviction, he was deprived of his fellowship and expelled.

ment before the House of Lords, the decision of the court is final. Mr. Adam's motion was opposed on the ground that the projected innovation in the criminal law of Scotland did not tend to remove any existing doubt, while it was not called for by the Scotch themselves, who were perfectly satisfied with the law as it stood The motion was rejected by a hundred and twenty-six votes against *thirty-one.*

It was Mr. Adam's intention, had the House adopted his motion, to give to the new law a retrospective effect, so as to include the case of Messrs. Muir and Palmer, whose fate appears to have had no small influence on his conduct on this occasion. Foiled in this attempt, he resolved to make an effort to gain his point by more direct means; and he gave notice of his intention to move for a revisal of the proceedings of the Court of Justiciary, in the cases of those convicts. In order to promote the same object, Mr. Sheridan, on the 24th of February, presented a petition from Palmer, who, as well as Muir, then lay on board transports at Woolwich, stating that he conceived himself to be suffering under an illegal sentence, and praying such relief as to the wisdom of the House should seem meet. Mr. Pitt urged the impropriety of the interposition of that House, between a sentence pronounced by a competent tribunal and the execution of that sentence; and, on that account, he thought the petion ought not to be received. It was, however, ultimately ordered to lie on the table; and, on the 10th of March the main question underwent a long and serious discussion.

It was contended by Mr. Adam, first, that the crime imputed to Messrs. Muir and Palmer did not amount to *leasing-making*, or public libel, which was the offence charged in the indictment, and which, by the English law, was only a misdemeanour; and, secondly, that, admitting it did, the punishment fixed by the law of Scotland was *banishment only*, and not *transportation*. He adduced several cases to prove the difference between *banishment* and *transportation*, and to shew that the law which inflicted the former did not, of necessity confer the power of inflicting the latter. He then advanced this position—that what should lead to the reversal of a sentence, on the ground of legal error,

in all cases where an appeal lay, should, where no such remedy could be applied, induce the House to address the Throne for mercy, as the only means left to attain the ends of justice.

On the other hand, the Lord Advocate of Scotland opposed Mr. Adam's exposition of the Scottish law, and impeached the justice of his conclusions.—It was perfectly immaterial, in his view of the case, whether the crime charged in the indictment was *sedition* or *leasing-making*, because for the latter the court was competent to inflict the punishment of transportation. The term *banishment*, he maintained, which occurred in the statute of 1703 against leasing-making, did, both by its common import, and more particularly by the usage of the Scotch law, include transportation. It was clear that the courts of law not only understood, but applied the word, in this comprehensive sense, from the uniform practice of the court of session in cases of fraudulent bankruptcy; which, by the statute of 1696, were made punishable by "Banishment," or otherwise, (death excepted;) and, in various instances, that court had transported such offenders to the plantations. Abundance of similar instances occurred in the records of the Court of Justiciary, which it was impossible to open without finding cases of persons sentenced to "banishment" by that court, and transportation described, in the concluding part of the sentence, as a mode of putting it into effect.—But, it was contended, that the matter was cleared from all doubt, by the fact, that, within eight months only after the statute of 1703 was passed, one Bailly was sentenced by the Privy Council, under that statute, to be banished for the crime of leasing-making, and was ordered to be detained in prison till a fit opportunity should offer for his "transportation;" and, in support of this inference, it was observed, that all the members of the Privy Council must have been members of the Parliament which enacted the law, and, of course, perfectly acquainted with the sense which the framers of it affixed to the word banishment.

Mr. Adam's propositions concerning sedition were controverted by Mr. Pitt, who observed, that, if it could be seriously maintained that no provision was made by the Scotch law for that numerous class

of offences which were punishable in England as crimes and misdemeanors, if that law were so defective, and authority so silent on the subject, it was the duty of civil society to declare, through its magistrates and judges, wherein the crime of sedition consisted, for a crime it was, permanent in its nature, however diversified by circumstances, times, and seasons. On the contrary he contended, that crimes of sedition, not comprehended within the statutes against leasing-making, were, by the common law of Scotland, liable to *arbitrary punishment*, that is, any punishment, short of death, which the discretion of the judges might lead them to inflict. These crimes were made treason by an act of 1584, which continued in force till 1707, when Scotch and English treasons were assimilated to each other.—From this period, then, they must be either reduced to nonentities, which it was absurd to imagine, or return to the same predicament, in the eye of the law, in which they stood prior to the statute of 1584.

Some other objections, in reference to the severity of the punishment, and the nature of the evidence, were urged and repelled; but these were the prominent, and only material, points for historical notice. After considerable discussion, thirty-two members were found to be in favour of the motion, and one hundred and seventy-one adverse to it. But Mr. Adam belonged to a party who were neither to be checked by disappointment, nor intimidated by defeat. A few days after this decision, he moved to appoint a committee to inquire, chiefly, into the crimes of leasing-making and sedition, the right of appeal, the power of granting a new trial, and the propriety of introducing a grand jury, similar to that of England. He again expatiated upon all the alleged defects in the present system of Scottish jurisprudence, and was again answered by the Lord Advocate, and by Mr. Dundas, who deprecated all wanton innovations, and denied the necessity of any change. Mr. Adam was not more successful on this, than on the former, occasion, having been able to persuade only three-and-twenty members of the House to adopt his opinions.

The same questions were agitated in the House of Lords, and with the same result. Lord Stanhope, with his usual eccentricity, moved

the House to investigate the case of Muir and Palmer; and if the proceedings in Scotland should be found to be illegal, to reverse the sentence,—that is, to assume a power which they did not possess. Such a motion was, of course, treated with marked neglect. Lord Lauderdale, on a future day, introduced the subject in a more regular way, and moved an address to the Throne, similar to that moved by Mr. Adam in the Lower House;—but his motion was rejected without a division.—Thus ended the attempt to rescue the convicted reformers of Scotland from their impending fate. The sentence pronounced upon them was now carried into effect, and they were all transported to New South Wales.

The Opposition resolved to suffer no opportunity to escape for attacking the Ministers, and ever anxious to display what they were pleased to term a constitutional jealousy, and an earnest desire to promote the public welfare, but what their opponents considered as the effect of disappointed ambition, an effusion of political spleen, and an unworthy attempt to acquire popularity at the expence of the best interests of the country; made every political measure now adopted, or omitted, the subject of animadversion and censure in Parliament. Mr. Sheridan charged the Ministers with neglect to put our colonial settlements in Nova Scotia in a proper state of defence; and to supply adequate convoys for the protection of our trade. But these charges were repelled by those against whom they were directed; and the House of Commons refused to entertain the proposed inquiry respecting them. A treaty which had been recently concluded with the King of Sardinia, by which a subsidy of 200,000*l.* was granted to that monarch to enable him to support 50,000 troops to act against France, supplied another ground of declamation, and another subject of complaint.—The subsidy was represented as perfectly needless, as that monarch had every motive of self-preservation to induce him to act without it. It does not seem to have occurred to these considerate politicians, that the *will* might exist without the *ability;* and that not merely *policy*, but *self-interest*, required that we should supply the means of carrying that will into effect, in support of the common cause. The debate to which

this transaction gave rise * was not otherwise interesting than as it produced a brilliant display of maiden eloquence from Mr. Canning, who had been recently brought into Parliament. The youthful orator did not limit his observations to the subject immediately before the House, but introduced it by an able and copious review of the origin and objects of the war, whence he deduced the wisdom and policy of the measure under discussion. He contended, with equal strength and justice, that such a treaty ought not to be examined on the petty tradesman-like principle of a *quid pro quo*, a narrow scrutiny into the goodness or badness of the bargain, but should be considered as forming a part of one great, connected, comprehensive scheme, which had for its object, not conquest or gain, but to repress the aggrandizing spirit of the French Republic. He spurned the ungenerous notion of taking advantage of the distressed situation of the Sardinian Monarch, in order to force his acceptance of inadequate terms. Such had not been the policy of Great Britain in former times. He adverted to a subsidy of 670,000*l.* voted to the King of Prussia in 1758, not to purchase the support of a powerful ally, but (as the preamble to the bill expressly declared) because he was harassed by his enemies, because he was deprived of part of his dominions, and was incapable of defending the remainder. These circumstances, which were now urged as good reasons for abandoning our ally, were, at that time, assigned as the very causes for the succour which we gave, and, unless this country had degenerated from its former liberality of sentiment, and of conduct, or had altered its political system, he hoped the same expanded and generous principles would still influence our decision on the present occasion.

Mr. Canning next entered into a masterly delineation of the features of the French Government, which he characterized with peculiar felicity. In retorting on the Opposition one of their favourite arguments, he observed, that if it were true, as had been perpetually asserted, that the reprobate characters who now ruled in France rose to power by the distractions of that country within, and by the pressure of hostile force

* January 31st.

from without, that power would cease with the cessation of the causes which produced it.—The moment of pacification, then, would be the moment of their downfal, and their downfal would cancel all their acts. This speech fixed the attention of the House, which afforded its sanction to the proposed subsidy. The Opposition also cavilled at the increase of the army, insisting that the attention of Government should be principally directed to the augmentation of our naval force.—But Mr. Pitt declared, that mere naval exertions were not sufficient against a country which did not possess the command of the sea, and which adopted no means for the protection of its commerce. It was the usurpation and aggrandizement of France, by land, which threatened Great Britain, as well as all Europe, and to that point it was necessary that our resistance should be directed. Even from our failures the necessity of an addition to our land force was deducible, for they had, uniformly, been owing to a vast superiority of numbers in the enemy, who were not merely an army, but an armed nation.—This last expression was captiously seized upon by the Opposition, as a proof of the accuracy of their own assertions respecting the spirit of union which influenced the efforts of Republican France. But Mr. Pitt instantly exposed the fallacy and absurdity of the inference, observing, that he had only used the term to shew that to their numbers alone the French were indebted for all the victories which they had gained; and that, admitting them to be an armed nation, it by no means followed that they were united.—Indeed, the reverse was notoriously the fact.—They were armed by terror, and exposed themselves to the sword of the enemy on the frontiers, only to avoid the greater danger of the guillotine at home.

The annual budget was opened by Mr. Pitt, on the 5th of February, when it appeared that the expences of the current year would amount to nineteen millions nine hundred and forty thousand pounds; and towards which the Land and Malt Tax, and the growing produce of the Consolidated Fund, with three millions and a half of Exchequer bills, and half a million from the East-India Company, would supply but eight millions nine hundred and forty thousand pounds, so that it became necessary to raise the sum of eleven millions by loan.—This

loan, agreeably to the principle of fair and open competition which Mr. Pitt had adopted, in preference to the old practice of disposing of the loan to any favourite contractor, and so rendering it, in many instances, the source of corrupt practices, had been taken on terms highly favourable to the public, the contractors having offered to accept, for each hundred pound to be advanced, so much stock and long annuities as, at the price of the day, would produce ninety-nine pounds nineteen shillings and ninepence. The interest of the eleven millions to be thus raised, together with the one per cent. to be appropriated to the gradual extinction of the capital, would amount to 650,000*l.* to which were to be added 248,000*l.* to be applied to the reduction of the existing and expected navy debt, (which Mr. Pitt proposed to devise the means of liquidating in a short time, contrary to the usual practice of leaving it to be funded and provided for at the end of the war;) and 10,000*l.* the amount of the vexatious tax upon gloves, and of another on births and burials, which he meant to repeal, making a total of 908,000*l.* The next point for consideration was the means by which this annual sum was to be raised. There remained, unappropriated, of taxes imposed in 1791, 385,000*l.*;—by a new regulation of the duty on spirits in Scotland, it was expected to supply 45,000*l.*;—by a new duty on British spirits, 107,000*l.*;—by a new duty on foreign spirits, 136,000*l.*;—by a duty of one shilling and sixpence per thousand on bricks and tiles, in addition to the existing duty of half-a-crown, 70,000*l.*;—by a similar duty on slate and stone carried coastwise, 30,000*l.*;—by a tax on plate and crown glass, 52,000*l.*;—by a fresh duty on paper, 63,000*l.*;—and, by a tax of 100*l.* on the indenture of every person articled to an attorney, and of another 100*l.* on his admission to practice, 25,000*l.*; but excluding, from the operation of this tax, those clerks who were already articled.—Thus the necessary sum would be raised without the addition of any impost which could be felt by the great mass of the people.

The French government having recently adopted measures for appropriating to their own use all the property of Frenchmen, of whatever nature or description, in foreign countries, and for giving assignats in exchange, Mr. Pitt deemed it expedient to counteract this nefarious

scheme, by the timely interference of the legislature.—Accordingly, a bill was soon after brought in by the Solicitor-General, which passed into a law, to prohibit, under severe penalties, the remittance of any sums from this country to France during the war. Such sums were to be considered as a sacred deposit in the hands of their present holders until a peace, when the creditors might sue for the recovery of them in the courts of law. By this wise regulation, not only the design of our enemies to support, by such means, the credit of their immense mass of assignats, would be frustrated, but individuals, also, would be protected against the monstrous oppression of being compelled to receive, at par, a paper-security not worth one-seventh of its nominal value.

Among the military plans in agitation at this time, was a projected expedition to the coast of France, with a view to co-operate with the loyalists in Britanny, and in the neighbouring districts; and a body of Hessian troops, in the pay of England, was destined for this service.—As, however, the preparations were not in a sufficient state of forwardness when these troops arrived from the Continent, and sickness would be produced by detaining them on board the transports, till every thing was ready for carrying the plan into effect; it was deemed proper to land them, and to put them into temporary quarters at Portsmouth, in the Isle of Wight, and in other convenient places, near the coast.—This circumstance was communicated to Parliament, in a message from his Majesty, on the 27th of March. As many similar cases had occurred at different periods, and as the cause and necessity of the measure were so perfectly obvious, it was natural to conclude, that the usual communication of the fact to Parliament would be satisfactory.—But it did not square with the views and designs of the Opposition, to suffer any act of the Minister to pass without censure or debate.—It was now insisted, that he ought to have moved for a bill of indemnity;—and he was charged with having violated the Bill of Rights, and the Act of Settlement. Mr. Grey, on the 10th of February, exerted all his ingenuity to induce the House to adopt the abstract proposition; "that to employ foreigners in any situation of military trust, or to bring foreign troops into the kingdom, without the consent of Parliament first had and obtained, is contrary to law."

In so framing his motion, he had, no doubt, a view to another object, the employment of French emigrant officers, which, soon after, became the subject of discussion. The folly of discussing abstract principles was strongly insisted on, by different members, but more particularly by Mr. Windham, who truly represented the only proper point for the House to consider, to be, whether the Minister had acted wrong in advising the disembarkation of the Hessian troops, under the circumstances of the case. But this was the only point which the Opposition did not choose to discuss; they preferred wasting their own time, and that of the House, in the discussion of principles which no one was so ignorant as to contest, and in the deprecation of consequences which no one was so weak as to expect. The motion for the previous question at length put an end to the debate. On a subsequent day, Mr. Grey renewed the same work of supererogation, and with the same effect.

With a view to put the nation in the best practicable state of defence against the threatened invasion by the French, as well as to leave as large a disposable force as possible for foreign service, Mr. Pitt had deemed it advisable to afford encouragement to the formation of volunteer companies, in augmentation of the militia, and also of distinct bodies of foot and horse, for the purpose of local defence.—This invitation was held out in a circular letter addressed to the Lords-Lieutenants of the different counties, who were supplied with a brief plan of the nature and conditions of the proposed service, and a general subscription was recommended as the best means of defraying the expence to be incurred by the execution of the scheme. On the 25th of March, the King communicated his intention of augmenting the land forces to Parliament, and called upon them to assist him in carrying into effect such measures as might be requisite for the general security.

Mr. Sheridan had made no scruple to stigmatize the voluntary contributions of the subject as most dangerous and unconstitutional, and he now signified his intention of calling upon the House to pronounce its illegality. Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, distinctly avowed his

decided opinion, that every subscription to be applied for the security of the country, in order to raise a force which should receive the sanction of Parliament, was legal and constitutional, and professed his readiness to meet the discussion whenever a proper opportunity should occur for the purpose. On the 28th of March, Mr. Sheridan brought forward his threatened motion.—In the full ardour of his patriotism, he did not hesitate to lay down the broad proposition, that the people had no right to give, or the King to receive, these benevolences, without the consent of Parliament.—And he assigned these reasons, as the grounds of his assertion:—1st. Because the contrary supposition militated against the first principles of a mixed government, and a representative system, and, consequently, was not reconcilable with the letter or spirit of our constitution.—2dly. Because it was not consistent with the ancient and sound usages of the country, nor conformable to the best authorities: and, 3dly. Because if it even had the sanction both of custom and authority, it was not a wise course, nor fit to be resorted to as a source of public revenue.*

It is evident that the last of these reasons could only decide the question of *expediency*, and not that of *right*;—and that, however valid the reason itself might be, the right might exist in spite of it. In discussing the two first reasons, Mr. Sheridan rather laboured to support one assertion by another equally disputable, than to adduce arguments, proofs, or authorities, in confirmation of his general position. His authorities, indeed, applied exclusively to *compulsory* benevolences, of the illegality of which no doubt could possibly be entertained. He was answered by the Attorney-General, who quoted many cases to prove that the right which Mr. Sheridan denied had been acknowledged by the best authorities, and acted upon in a variety of instances. In 1759, the City of London had subscribed a sum of money, which was sent to the Secretary of State, *to be applied agreeably to the order of council*; and Mr. Pitt (father to the present Minister) wrote a letter in answer to this, containing a warm acknowledgment of the patriotism of the City, and an assurance that the money should be no otherwise applied than as the Privy Council should direct. In 1778, another

* Rivington's Annual Register for 1794, p. 180, 181.

similar case had occurred, which was sanctioned by the authority of Lords Camden and Thurlow; and by the refusal of the House of Commons to declare its illegality, when a motion for that purpose was made by Mr. Wilkes. The invitation to raise volunteers, in 1782, was also cited as a case in point. The same line of argument was adopted by Mr. Windham, and others, while it was strongly opposed by Mr. Fox.

The schism which had taken place in the Opposition, and which had since been followed by an open rupture, led to much bitterness of sarcasm, keenness of rebuke, and severity of reproach, from both parts of it, during this discussion. By Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, and others, who had, from the most honourable and patriotic motives, supported the Ministers in their resistance of French principles, and of French arms, it was remarked, and certainly not with more severity than truth, that the most zealous partisans of the French cause could not adopt a line of conduct more favourable to the views of the enemy than that pursued by the mover and supporters of the present question; who had deserted the genuine principles of their party, and had joined a set of men, whose wild and frantic notions of democracy would, if reduced to practice, accomplish universal ruin. Mr. Sheridan, on the other hand, called upon his opponents to come boldly forth, and impeach those whom they really suspected of treason,—instead of indulging in dark and unwarranted insinuations, in striking and insidious jeers. This call had more of warmth than of real courage in it, for he very well knew that these gentlemen never meant to reproach him with the actual commission of treason, though they most correctly stated the tendency of his conduct to be most hostile to the good of his country. Mr. Sheridan, however, arraigned them with great violence, for, what he preposterously termed, their base desertion of *himself*, and of his friends, for their prostitution of every principle which they had before maintained, both in public and private, and for their *servile* submission in supporting every plan of the Minister, of that Minister who was, before, the uniform object of their derision, reproach, and scorn. This virulent invective, at once unparliamentary, indecent, and unfounded, only served to shew the bitterness of that disappointment which was felt by the retainers of the party, at the honourable conduct of their leaders.

Lord Lauderdale echoed the sentiments of Mr. Sheridan in the House of Lords, where only six members could be found to concur with him in his opinions. The discussion, however, was renewed in the House of Commons, on the 7th of April, on the third reading of the bill for the encouragement and discipline of such persons as should voluntarily enrol themselves for the general defence of the country. On this occasion, Mr. Francis moved, that the third article of the Bill of Rights should be read, which declares, "That levying money for, or to the "use of the Crown, by pretence of prerogative, without grant of "Parliament, for longer time, or in other manner, than the same is or "shall be granted, is illegal." Mr. Francis contended that voluntary subscriptions, were a direct violation of the principle maintained in this article; and he went still farther than Mr. Sheridan, and asserted, that it was not in the power of Parliament to sanction the proceeding; Parliament were delegates themselves, and could not delegate their duty to others. So that, according to this mode of reasoning, it was impossible to raise voluntary subscriptions for the defence of the country; for neither the people nor their representatives had the power so to raise them. A curious kind of constitution must that be which forbids all those, who enjoy its advantages, voluntarily to contribute to its support against foreign and domestic enemies. Lord Wycombe took the same side of the question, contending that the precedent of 1782 did not apply to the present case, and observing that there was a wide distinction between a subscription for a naval force, and a subscription for the increase of the army.

Mr. Pitt now thought it necessary to deliver his sentiments on the question, and, in order to disembarrass it as much as possible from all extraneous, irrelevant, or doubtful matter, he consented to wave any advantage which might be derived from the proceeding of 1782, and to argue it on a general view of the laws and constitution of the country, as they appeared written in the statute books, handed down by precedents, and confirmed by the first and most respectable authorities, legal as well as political, which the page of British history, or the records of jurisprudence, could boast.—And he contended, that on a fair construction of those laws, and of that constitution, by principles of reason

and of truth, the measure would be found to stand on the firmest grounds, and to resist every attack which subtlety and ingenuity could possibly devise, or temerity venture to make upon it. He stated as his reason for having opposed the production of the circular letters issued in 1782, that the merit of the present case did not at all hinge or depend upon that precedent.—He noticed, however, an observation of Mr. Grey,—"That as the letters were not produced in form, he would, in imitation of the practice of the courts of law, deny the authenticity of such as were produced, and say that they were fabrications and forgeries!" Such terms, Mr. Pitt said, might possibly be used by Mr. Grey when he thought them useful to his argument; for his part, he doubted whether they would not be reprobated for their coarseness even in a court of law; but he begged leave to remind that gentleman, for his instruction, that he was then in a *Court of Parliament*, and that his language was, to say no worse of it, more adapted to an advocate at law than to a Member of Parliament.

The distinctions made by Lord Wycombe, Mr. Pitt stated to apply to the mode of executing the measure, and not to the true constitutional point; for while he reprobated subscriptions for an army, he approved of them for increasing the navy; instanced a number of cases which had already been mentioned by the Attorney-General, and added his own contribution also, by producing another instance, of the subscription for encountering the Spanish Armada. His Lordship's distinction, however, between subscribing for a navy and for an army, was downright subtlety, mere fallacious casuistry, too flimsily and slightly covered, to escape detection, even by the weakest sight.—For, first, he stated, that all voluntary contributions were illegal, yet admitted that for a navy they would be justifiable; here, then, ended the great abstract principle. But the subscription, not illegal *per se*, was vitiated by its being for an army; this was directly confounding the end with the means; that is to say, the *end*, not the *means*, vitiated the measure; for if it were true that a subscription could not legally be taken at all, nor any money levied but by the direct order of Parliament, it could no more be done for one branch of the public service than for the other. In the next breath, the noble lord had contended, that the case in 1794

was adverse to the laws and constitution, while that in 1782 was perfectly legal, because the same means (voluntary contributions) were not pursued, though the end was the same, namely, to raise an army. And thus the simple fact of raising an army, in 1794, was to be the destruction of that constitution, and the ruin of the noblest fabric which the wisdom of man had ever raised; but, in 1782, it was so laudable, so legal, and so constitutional, as to be held up in contrast to the mischiefs now threatened. Whatever degree of favour popular opinions might lead some men to attach to the one measure, in preference to the other, the truth was, that there was not in the history of this country to be found a war, in which the privilege of subscribing to the assistance of government, against the enemy, had not been enjoyed by the people; and, in the course of which, there were not to be found answers to all the objections that had been urged against the present measure.

Having stated the fallacy and absurdity of this mode of reasoning, Mr. Pitt proceeded to shew, that although the circular letter of Lord Shelburne, in 1782, had been positively stated to exclude all idea of subscription, it had not been so understood through the country. The county of Sussex, which had, by public subscription, raised and supported a large military force, in 1779, and the two succeeding years, immediately on receiving that letter, and thinking it implied a desire for a subscription, set on foot contributions in consequence of it, and actually raised, and grafted on their former establishment, no less than three additional companies. Here, then, was, according to the principles maintained by the very gentlemen at that time in power, a manifest violation of the constitution. Why did they not *then* resist it? Why not make it a subject of Parliamentary Investigation? And what, he desired to know, was so properly an object of their jealousy, as an illegal and unconstitutional act, committed on the footing and authority of their own letter? They should have stept forward and saved their country from the impending ruin. But did they do so?—No!—They knew that the measure was legal, constitutional, and salutary; though, unfortunately for the credit of their politics, their sentiments

changed with their situations, and they now thought it illegal, unconstitutional, and mischievous!

He next considered the question in a legal point of view, and produced a variety of indisputable authorities to establish the legality of voluntary contributions. In 1746, he said, a doubt had been cast upon it, but it was unequivocally decreed by Lord Hardwicke. On that occasion, many great men had raised regiments at their own expence, and he wished to know who that man was that would be so regardless of reputation, as to maintain that great men might, legally, and with safety to the constitution, subscribe, and three or four hundred yeomen could not? It had been said, that if contributions were purely spontaneous, they were legal;—but if made on the solicitation of government, not so. To the spirit and principle of this distinction, he declared, he would never assent; but even admitting that it really were so, no skill nor ingenuity could rescue the case of 1782 from that anathema; for he would maintain, that the secretary's letter, and the plans which it enclosed, contained a solicitation which, in 1794, would be called a mandate.

Mr. Pitt entered into a minute consideration of all the precedents, from the Revolution to the year 1778, which he brought to bear immediately upon the point in question; and shewed that, in principle and effect, there was no difference between them. The case of 1778 was the only one in which the principle of voluntary contributions had been contested. He had, for many reasons, great respect for the illustrious characters (Lord Camden, Mr. Burke, and others) who gave their opinions, on that subject, against the legality of subscriptions; but, with all the esteem which he entertained for them, he could not forbear to remark, that no man, who had studied human nature, could fail to perceive that, in the most enlightened minds, there was a bias which, on certain occasions, and under certain circumstances, operated upon the judgment, and sometimes led it to mistake the means for the end; and men, even in deciding upon principle, were subject to this abuse of the understanding. This, with all due defe-

rence for the great characters to whom he alluded, appeared to Mr. Pitt to have been the case with them, in the discussion of the subject, in the year 1778. They were then deciding on a question, implicating the American war—a war against the principle of which they had often protested, and, therefore, they thought they were supporting the same cause by deciding against the measure then proposed, and, without knowing it, confounded the means with the end. In this view did it appear to Parliament, who determined against these great men. But, supposing that the opposition of that day had prevailed, it would not go to vitiate the present measure, it being, of all others, the least analogous to it; for the subscription of 1778 was to be applied to such purposes as the King should think proper to direct, whereas the contribution now proposed was to be applied by Parliament to a particular object.—He then adverted to all the cases, of a similar nature, which had occurred since that period, and drew from them the strongest inferences in support of his argument.

Mr. Pitt said, that gentlemen talked loudly of liberty, while they seemed to be most willing to encroach on it, when the encroachment answered their own purposes. He knew, that a portion of individual liberty was often, of necessity, sacrificed for the general good; but it must be in cases where the general evil would be greater than the individual evil. In the present instance, the first liberty of the subject, the right of disposing of his own property, was attempted to be wrested from him; while the general good would be promoted by the free exercise of that right, and by the unrestrained enjoyment of that liberty. He laid it down as a maxim, in the law and constitution of England, that every man had a right to apply any part of his property he pleased for any legal purpose, unless expressly prohibited by statute; and he maintained, that there was not, in the whole of our Statute-book, one prohibition of subscriptions for carrying on a war. The Bill of Rights, he said, had no more application to this subject, than any other law in the Statute-book; and, having said this, he disclaimed all intention of speaking with disrespect of that great and justly-revered law; or of any gentleman who might quote it. He thought, however, that it had been strangely misapplied.

It would have been a most extraordinary thing, indeed, if a bill, framed for the express purpose of asserting, vindicating, and guarding the rights of the people, had contained a clause for despoiling them of one of the most essential of those rights—the free disposal of their own property. And equally so, that a bill, which had for its object the preservation of the constitution, should have forbidden the people spontaneously to contribute any portion of their property for its support and protection,—though it affords the only security for their rights, their liberties, and their possessions.

To suppose danger to the constitution, from such contributions, is to admit the monstrous supposition, that the people would commit an act of political suicide, by conspiring with the Crown for the destruction of their own freedom!

Mr. Pitt examined the different statutes against *benevolences*, and clearly shewed that they were really (what no one, who was acquainted with the history of the times in which they were enacted, could possibly be ignorant of) laws against exactions or extortion. The people had been compelled to contribute, and compulsory processes had been issued against them from the Exchequer, to exact that which was falsely and hypocritically denominated a free-will offering. He next argued the question on the ground of reason. An alarm had been professed at the proposed measure, because, it was asserted, it went to destroy the constitution, by trenching on its principles, in interfering with the functions of the House. He admitted, that the House of Commons were the guardians of the public purse, that nothing should be carried on, either in war or peace, without their knowledge, and that they were the channel through which the King must receive the necessary supplies. The dominion which the House of Commons exclusively possessed over the general wealth of the nation, was a wise provision to render the Executive Government dependent on Parliament, and, by that means, indirectly responsible for the just discharge of their public duty. But would any man, he asked, seriously maintain, that the subscriptions in question interfered with that principle, or that they trenched on the constitutional control which the House of

Commons had over the real and substantial supplies to be granted to the Executive power, so as to endanger the constitution itself?—The fact was, that, in numberless instances, the abstract right had been often intrenched upon; but such intrenchment had never yet raised apprehensions in any man's mind. It was, indeed, a strange chimerical mode of speaking, to say, that, at a moment when every thing in the circumstances of the times tended to impel people to opposite motives of action, they were likely to make the King independent, and that the people would conspire for the destruction of themselves, their property, and their constitution. The navy and army establishments amounted, in ordinary times, to four millions annually; in time of war, they rose much higher; yet, while it was argued, that the subscriptions must be inconsiderable and inadequate to any material purpose, the general tenour of their argument led to the supposition, that the voluntary contributions would be sufficient, not only for the ordinaries, but the extraordinaries also, immense as they were;—a supposition so absurd, that it was rather calculated to excite pity and laughter, than deserving of any serious consideration.

He commented, towards the conclusion of his speech, with great strength, ability, and wisdom, on the absurdity of taking abstract principles as infallible guides to practice in political affairs. Cases, he observed, which, though extreme, were yet not physically impossible, might be adduced, *ad infinitum*, in order to extinguish all those principles of action which arise from experience and probability. In deciding on such extreme cases, the probability of their occurrence must be taken into the account; but what power that imagination could conceive would be safe, if that principle of suspicion were carried to the extent to which art and ingenuity might strain it? Objections might be urged on the dry, abstract, theoretical point, while it was evident, that there existed no real, or even probable, grounds of danger; and when men were disposed to insist on the theoretic inconsistency of a subscription from individuals, while there existed a representative body for granting supplies, Mr. Pitt said, he would refer them to every period of our history, and then tell them—"My experience is a good argument against your theory."—It was not by attending to the dry, strict, abstract

principles of a point, that a just conclusion was to be formed on political subjects. Such subjects were not to be determined by mathematical accuracy. Wisdom is to be gained in politics; not by any one rigid principle, but by examining a number of incidents; by looking attentively at causes, and reflecting on the effects which they have produced; by comparing a number of events together, and by taking, as it were, an average of human affairs. This was the true way to become wise in politics: not by adopting that false philosophy which seeks perfection out of that which is imperfect in its nature; which refers all things to theory, nothing to practice; which rejects experience, and brings the principles of science to things not capable of receiving them; which substitutes visionary hypothesis for the solid test of experiment, and bewilders the human mind in a maze of opinions, when it should be employed in directing to action; and which would proceed, as it were, *per saltum*, from the indulgence of theoretical systems to the execution of them. But the chasm, he justly remarked, was wide indeed between the practice and the imaginary point to which those alarmists would carry things. That pedant politician, who thought to make a political machine perfect in all its parts, and regular in all its movements, thought of that which could exist only in the imagination; the various checks and counter-checks, by which he might hope to regulate its motions, and correct its aberrations, would serve only to clog its motions, impede its progress, and overload it with difficulties.

Mr. Pitt confessed, however, that, in the adoption of the present measure, he was governed, in some degree, by a principle of another kind. In contemplating the benefits likely to result from it, he could not help considering what sentiments it proclaimed, and what effects it would have on the minds and opinions of the world; and, though it had been contended, that it would tend to mark men out, and to raise invidious distinctions in society, he would say, that if it served the purpose of actual defence, on the one hand, or of intimidating and overawing the enemy, and of baffling their plans, on the other, it was not to be rejected because some persons were less alive than others to the good of the country. He regarded it as an act merely voluntary, having the sanction of Parliament, which mixed the zeal and warmth

of individual will with the power of legal authority, and gave an energy which no law could impart; as an act which interested the hearts of the inhabitants of the kingdom, and gave fresh vigour to the cause in which we were engaged, by shewing, that not only the Legislature, but also the individuals, of this country, were warm in the pursuit of the war, as involving every thing which was dear to man in a civilized state; and, therefore, he hoped and trusted it would succeed. Nor was it to England alone that this practice would be confined, for it would spread over the other parts of Europe, and tend to dispel the delusion which the present rulers of France, and their emissaries and agents, had been artfully endeavouring to excite in every part of that quarter of the globe; it would shew them, that the hopes held out that, if they invaded this country, they would find great numbers of followers and supporters, was a gross imposition on the credulity of the French, and a libel on the loyalty of the people of England. He concluded with repeating his assertion, that the bill was agreeable to the spirit of the constitution; and highly expedient under the circumstances of the country.—The bill then passed without a division.

The Opposition having proved unable to defeat the Minister, on this, their favourite ground, resolved to make another attack without delay. Mr. Harrison was selected for the purpose; and the subject chosen was one which the party justly considered as admirably calculated to secure the popular prejudice in their favour, and to turn it against their opponents. They wisely thought, too, that a more fit season could not be chosen for such a discussion, than the present, when the abuses of government, and the profligacy of placemen and pensioners, were the constant subject of declamation with all the patriotic reformers of the day. It might have occurred, indeed, to a genuine patriot, that, when the scale of democracy seemed to preponderate, it was his duty to throw what weight he could into the opposite scale, instead of contributing his influence to make it kick the beam. But the only consideration which appears to have entered into the minds of the Opposition, at this period, was, by what means they could best injure the Minister in the public estimation, and promote the cause of his enemies, of whatever description. At least, their

conduct was precisely such as it would have been, if they had been actuated, exclusively, by such motives.

The notable plan which Mr. Harrison proposed, was the abolition of certain places and pensions, the curtailment of others, and the reduction of the salaries of public offices.—He meant to leave untouched all sinecures under 200*l.* per annum, and all efficient places under 500*l.*; but to tax all other salaries, in a given proportion, with the exception of those of the judges, ambassadors, and some few others.—The only plausible reason which he attempted to urge in defence of the scheme was, that, as a landed income of 5000*l.* was, by the pressure of the times, reduced to 4000*l.* there was no reason why those who subsisted on the public money should not submit to a similar reduction.—Two very obvious circumstances seem wholly to have eluded the vigilance of this acute statesman.—First, that the same cause which reduced the value of incomes derived from land, contributed to decrease the value of all other incomes in at least an equal degree.—And, secondly, that those who subsisted on the public money, laboured hard to gain their subsistence, and were, at least, as well entitled to enjoy it in security, as the inheritor of land, who was indebted to the merit of his ancestors for the property which he enjoyed, and to the industry of the farmer for the produce which it yielded. But Mr. Harrison had not sagacity enough to cast even a flimsy veil over the real object of his motion, for he openly declared, that it was more particularly advisable to tax Ministers in this way, because, by feeling the smart of war themselves, they might be more readily inclined to free the nation from its curse. Admitting that the diminution of their salaries would have any influence on the conduct of Ministers, it surely might as well operate to prevent them from engaging in a war, however just, or however necessary for the honour and safety of the country, as induce them to accelerate its termination when once begun.—But such vulgar declamation was wholly unworthy of a serious answer.

It was reasonably contended, on the other side, that no money was so honourably acquired as that which was earned by public services;

and that the men against whom this plan was meant to operate, as an exclusive tax, merited a very different distinction ;—they sacrificed time and talents to their country, which, if devoted to any other pursuits, would procure them ample fortunes. As a measure of economy, it was pointedly ridiculed, as a poor and paltry attempt ; while, considered in a more serious light, it was justly condemned as a direct invasion of the property of individuals, held, equally with landed estates, under sanction of the law.

The pretext of economy which was so strongly urged by the supporters of the motion, induced Mr. Rose to exhibit unequivocal proofs of the economical disposition of the Minister, in the reduction of expences, by the abolition of some offices, and by the adoption of salutary reforms in the various departments of government, to the great advantage of the revenue.—Mr. Fox, who spoke for a considerable time in support of the motion, being himself in the very situation of the proposed objects of taxation, was reduced to the necessity of giving such an awkward turn to his argument, as exposed him to a most severe retort. He admitted that the efficient offices of state were, in general, not overpaid, and objected to the plan of interference with sinecure places held for a term of years, or for life, which he deemed equally sacred with any private property. It was not easy to perceive the justice of this distinction ; for, to a common understanding, it would appear that sinecure places, which were not given as the reward of public services, were, of all places, those which had the least claim to exemption from any proposed tax. He was answered by Mr. Pitt, who, in one of the most ingenious speeches that man ever delivered, and of which no report, unfortunately, has been preserved, dissected Mr. Fox's arguments, one by one, and, with singular felicity, turned them all against himself.* He observed that, as Mr. Fox admitted that the offices in question were not overpaid

* I was present during this discussion, and was astonished at the ingenuity displayed by Mr. Pitt in his answer to Mr. Fox.—I looked into the papers of the following day for an account of his speech, and was greatly disappointed at finding, that not only the particular expressions, and the turn of the argument, but even its very spirit and substance had wholly escaped the reporters.

even in time of peace, it was highly unjust to abridge their profits during war, when the labour of them was so greatly increased. In order to refute one argument of Mr. Fox, who had ascribed his support of the present measure to the adoption of the system of voluntary contributions, Mr. Pitt said, it was only necessary to state its substance in other words—"That he would support a measure of which he disapproved to-day, merely because another measure had been carried against him yesterday, and would balance the impropriety of raising voluntary contributions in the first instance, by compelling contributions in the second." Mr. Pitt reprobated the idea of having recourse to such means of supply; and observed, that the retrenchments which had been made in the public expenditure, during his administration, were not intended so much for a saving to the public, as to diminish the influence of the Crown.—Fifty members voted for the question, and one hundred and seventeen against it.

Having adopted the necessary measures for increasing the naval and military force, in order to prosecute the war with vigour and effect, Mr. Pitt deemed it expedient to enlarge the means of attack, by embodying the numerous emigrants from France who had sought refuge in this country. Those gallant men, among whom was the flower of the French nobility, were, as might be supposed, most anxious to contribute their efforts for the demolition of a system which had produced the most destructive effects, and which, notwithstanding the partial support which it experienced from a small discontented party in Parliament, and from the disaffected out of it, was generally held in deserved execration. A bill was therefore prepared "To enable his "Majesty to employ subjects of France on the Continent of Europe, "in the West Indies, Guernsey and Jersey, and other places." This bill, like every other measure proposed by the Minister, for humbling the power of Revolutionary France, was strongly resisted by the Opposition.—Mr. Sheridan, in particular, taxed it with cruelty, for exposing men in battle, to whom, it was well known, their enemies would give no quarter. He asked whether their death would be revenged by retaliation on the French prisoners in our possession?—Mr. Burke having answered in the affirmative, Mr. Sheridan declaimed, with great vio-

lence, against what, by an equal perversion of language and of sentiment, he termed the barbarity of such a notion. It is by such language as this, by a spurious philanthropy, which is nothing but cruelty in disguise, so frequently manifested, by their supporters, in foreign countries, that the regenerated French, who are, indisputably, the most barbarous and sanguinary people in the whole civilized world, have been encouraged to gratify those diabolical passions which the principles of their Revolution either engendered or brought forth into action, and to slake their thirst for vengeance with the blood of the most virtuous part of their own countrymen, and of innocent strangers. The impunity thus early secured to them, and for which the powers combined against them have much to answer, has led to the commission of more atrocious murders; to the perpetration of more acts of brutal revenge and wanton cruelty; to more extensive massacres; and to the destruction of more individuals, than have been witnessed, in the same space of time, from the creation to the present moment.—Men, who sink the senator in the partisan, and who are regardless of consequences, so that they can but foil a Minister, or embarrass a government, may embellish their speeches with popular professions, and high-sounding phrases of philanthropy. But it is the province of History to strip such orators of their tinsel coverings, and to exhibit them to posterity in their genuine colours. The voice of truth will proclaim the principle of retaliation, so loudly reprobated, to be consistent alike with the rules of justice, and the precepts of Scripture.—Its adoption is, in fact, an act of humanity; since its necessary tendency is, by the operation of fear, to prevent acts of cruelty, and to save the lives of men.—And, when no other measure will produce the same effect, it is not only justifiable to have recourse to it, but it becomes a duty to enforce it.

The bill was further opposed, as being impolitic and unconstitutional, and Mr. Whitbread, and some others, who joined in the Opposition, censured Ministers very pointedly, for their apparent astonishment at the objections which had been made to it, just as if it were a matter of course, and perfectly conformable to law, *to take into the service of this country an immense body of Roman Catholics, foreigners, and men who had taken no test whatever.* It was contended, that by styling the emigrants

"Subjects of France," Ministers had not only recognised the French Republic, but had admitted the right of that government to treat them as rebels, if taken in arms. The effect of this wretched quibble, however, was soon done away by Mr. Pitt, who took an early opportunity, when the bill was in a committee, to substitute these words, "Subjects of the late most Christian King," instead of those on which the quibble was built. On the third reading of this bill, the subject was more fully discussed than it had been before. Mr. Fox then took the lead in opposition to it, and accused the Ministers of having deserted the ground on which they had originally professed to act.—They took up arms to repel an aggression, and did not disclaim the idea of treating; but they had now plunged the country into a bloody and ruinous war, without a hope of release but from a wild and visionary project.—By engaging the emigrants in their service, they had avowed their determination to overthrow the existing government; and, consequently, all our successes at sea, all our acquisitions in the East and West Indies, had not the smallest tendency to hasten the return of peace,—nothing but the absolute conquest of France could effect it.

He compared the new government of France with the old, and gave a decided preference to the former, though a government more hostile to the liberty of the subject had never been framed by man.—He denied, with an equal regard to truth, the existence of any right to interfere with the internal concerns of that country, and professed to found his denial, both on the ground of equity and on the positive law of nations. Alluding to Mr. Burke's defence of the system of retaliation, he deprecated the scenes of massacre and carnage that might ensue from such a warfare;—though the least attention to passing events in France might have convinced him that it could not possibly produce more massacres and carnage, than had been committed, without any such stimulus, every year, every month, and almost every day, since the first creation of that stupendous monument of human wisdom which had so forcibly extorted his applause and admiration. He inferred, from some events in our own history, and particularly in the two last rebellions, the justification of the French government in putting to death those whom they might take in arms against their

country, although employed by foreign powers. Never were facts more grossly perverted, and never was inference so false and unfounded. Indeed, whether that inference be considered as calculated to deter the emigrants from entering into the service, or as an encouragement to the regicides to murder them, for it had an equal tendency both ways,—it was alike reprehensible. Will posterity believe, that any member of the British Senate could dare to contend, that rebels, who had deposed and murdered their lawful, and unoffending Sovereign, who had forcibly destroyed the constitution of their country, plundered and massacred its loyal inhabitants, and usurped the Supreme power, had thence acquired a legal possession of the sovereignty, and a right to put to death those subjects of the monarchy who had remained true to their oaths, and faithful to their allegiance, for endeavouring to recover the rights of the throne, which they, in common with the rebels themselves, had sworn to defend, and their own plundered property, which had been wrested from them by the hand of violence?—To assert such a right, was to confound right and wrong, rebellion and loyalty, truth and perjury! It was to give the attributes of law and justice to fraud, violence, rapine, and murder!—But Mr. Fox did not stop even here; he asserted, that even if the emigrants should succeed in their efforts to restore the monarchy, they would turn their arms against us, in the event of any application for indemnity on our part.

This virulent declamation was satisfactorily answered by Mr. Dundas and Mr. Burke.—The former depicted, in its true colours, the hideous system of the French government; and having shewn that it was equally hostile to the safety of other states, and to the happiness of its own people, maintained the necessity of attempting to destroy it. And he truly observed, that no means were so likely to produce this desirable end, as the collection, under one banner, of those unfortunate sufferers, whose zeal must be kindled by a hatred of their oppressors, by a consciousness that they sought for a restoration of their honours, their property, and their families, and that they were actuated by a sincere love of their country, and were anxious to restore to it the blessings of peace, loyalty, and religion.

Mr. Dundas shewed, that the right of interference with the government of other countries, when necessary for the security of our own, which Mr. Fox had so peremptorily denied, was explicitly asserted by the best writers on the law of nations, particularly by Mr. Fox's own favourite author, Vattel.*—It was further to be observed, that those writers speak of interference only in time of peace;—they had no notion of a doubt to be raised about it in the case of a hostile state; much less of one from which an unprovoked aggression had been received, and whose aim, and principle, it was to excite rebellion amongst all its neighbours. Mr. Dundas, adverting to the subject of retaliation, expressed his unwillingness to lay down any abstract rule; the exercise of the right must be left to the circumstances which called for it. Generals, possessed of as much wisdom and humanity as any man could boast of, had acknowledged the necessity of putting a stop to cruelty by retaliation; but it was neither wise nor necessary to reduce this point to defined or general principles.—He denied the imputed inhumanity of accepting the proffered services of the emigrants, who knew the value of what they had lost, and the prospect there was of regaining it;—their desire to serve was the result of free deliberation;

* I had formerly occasion to notice Mr. Fox's duplicity, in arguing this question of interference, in my comments on Lord Lauderdale's letters to the Peers of Scotland.—"The authority of Vattel you must allow to be decisive, particularly since it was quoted by Mr. Fox, in support of his own opinion on the question.—That opinion went to the establishment of the general principle, that one state has no right to interfere in the government of another state,—a principle, the justice of which no man can deny, and which, of course, so eminent a writer as Vattel could not fail to confirm. But Mr. Fox, with a degree of insincerity which might, perhaps, be excusable in an advocate pleading in a court of justice, but which certainly was unpardonable in the more liberal and dignified discussions of a British senate, omitted to notice Vattel's exception to the general rule, which immediately applied to the point in question:—'If then,' says Vattel, 'there be any where a nation of a *restless* and *mischievous* 'disposition, always ready to *injure others*, to traverse their designs, and TO RAISE DOMESTIC 'TROUBLES, it is not to be doubted, that all have a right to join, in order to repress, chastise, 'and put it ever after out of his power to injure them.'†—A more complete justification of the conduct of England, and of the other Belligerent powers, could not have been offered. It is evident that the right, here asserted by Vattel, is founded on the natural principle of self-preservation."—*Letter to the Earl of Lauderdale*, p. 85, 86.

† Vattel, Book II. Chap. 4.

and every one must applaud the wisdom and maguanimity of their choice.

He defended our expeditions against the colonial possessions of our enemies, on the ground that, by the loss of them, they were deprived of their resources.—He was less successful, however, in vindicating the Ministers against the charge of impolicy in forbearing to send timely assistance to the Royalists in La Vendée; for there can be little doubt that, if such assistance had been afforded, early in the year 1793, more would have been done towards the destruction of the Republican government than by the combined efforts of the confederate armies on the frontiers.

Mr. Burke entered more at large upon the defence of the *lex talionis*, which, he affirmed, was part of the law of nations, as founded on the law of nature;—retaliation was the punishment provided for the infraction of that law, and to inflict it, under certain circumstances, was as necessary to humanity as it was to justice. God forbid, he said, that the authors of murder should not find it recoil on their own heads! The application of this principle must indeed be modified by prudence, the essential constituent and regulator of all virtue; but this practical restriction left the principle itself unimpaired. The bill was warmly supported by all those members who had dismissed Mr. Fox and his associates from their party, and who thought the measure the most efficacious of any which had yet been adopted, for aiming a vital blow at that Jacobin government, for whose welfare and success the Foxites betrayed such a feeling concern, and such a lively sensibility. *Seven* Peers only could be found, in the Upper House, to oppose the principle of the bill, which was, of course, passed by a great majority.

While the projects of the Minister, for the support of the war, underwent this ample discussion, other subjects, either immediately connected with it, or made to rise out of it, were brought into debate, by the active members of the Opposition. In the month of February, (the 17th) the Marquis of Lansdowne had made a motion for an address to the King, beseeching him to avow his disposition to treat with France

for peace, on liberal and disinterested terms. His lordship drew a most gloomy picture of the state of the coalition against France, which he represented as a most heterogeneous composition, utterly inadequate to the attainment of any of the professed objects of the war. He was supported by the Duke of Grafton, and the Earls of Guildford and Lauderdale; and successfully opposed by Earls Fitzwilliam and Caernarvon, the Duke of Leeds, Lords Sydney, Kinnoul, and Grenville. A declaration of Barrere, in the National Convention, "That "England wished for peace; that England shall have peace; but that "it must be by sacrificing her constitution," was quoted by the opposers of the motion, as fully expressive of the disposition and views of the French government, respecting this country. The motion was rejected by 103 votes against 13.

A motion, similar in effect, though more direct in expression, was made by Mr. Whitbread, in the Lower House, early in the ensuing month (on the 7th of March). This gentleman contended, that however just and necessary the war might be, still the alliances which we had contracted were highly ruinous and impolitic. He, therefore, proposed to present a remonstrance to the King, against all the treaties entered into with the confederate powers since the commencement of the war, (including, of course, that treaty with Sardinia, of which the House had recently declared its approbation,) and for advising his Majesty to extricate himself from those engagements. In the course of this discussion, the most bitter invectives were lavished on the allies of Great Britain, while all the atrocious proceedings of the French government did not extort a single animadversion. The motion was resisted by Mr. Pitt, as being nothing less than a motion for peace; for so long as the war continued, it would be indispensably necessary to form as strong and as numerous alliances as we possibly could. With respect to the particular merits of those treaties, by which the co-operation of other powers had been secured, no arguments had been advanced to shew, that the terms were inconsistent with approved practice, or with that line of policy which had received the sanction of the House.—Complaints had, indeed, been preferred against particular parts of the conduct of our allies, some of them previous to the war, and others

during the war. This conduct, especially in the instance of Poland, he was by no means willing to defend; but the question was, whether we should allow one act of injustice to deprive us of the aid of those powers, in resisting the universal, systematic injustice of our enemy?—Whether Great Britain, the soul of a confederacy on which all our hopes depended, should herself, from motives of scrupulous delicacy, dissolve it at a time when it was most her interest to strengthen and cement it?—It had been falsely stated, that we were bound, by our treaties, to act with this confederacy, until each member of it had declared himself satisfied; whereas, on the contrary, it was provided, that whenever the places taken by the enemy should be restored to their original possessors, either party should be at liberty to conclude a peace. As to the views of our allies, concerning the future government of France, whatever they might be, Mr. Pitt expressly declared, that we were engaged in a contest only so far as related to our own defence. On a division, there appeared for the motion, 26—against it 138. A similar motion was soon after rejected in the House of Lords, by a majority of 96 to 9.

Having been foiled, in all their attempts, to procure a change in the general system, the Opposition now assumed a more limited ground of complaint, and directed their attention to the imprisoned patriots of France, who had been seized, in 1792, on the territory of Liege, within the Austrian posts. On the 17th of March, General Fitzpatrick moved, in the House of Commons, an address to the Throne, representing that the detention of General La Fayette, Alexander Lameth, Bureau de Puzy, and Latour Maubourg, (three members of the Constituent Assembly, who were arrested at the same time,) was injurious to his Majesty, and the cause of his allies; and humbly beseeching his Majesty to intercede for their deliverance, in such a manner as to his royal wisdom should seem most proper. General Fitzpatrick, who had lived in habits of intimacy with La Fayette, pronounced a strong panegyric on his unfortunate friend, who, according to his representation, was a paragon of honour, and a model of patriotism.—From his conduct, in the French Revolution, strange to say, the General inferred, that he was a firm friend to his murdered Monarch,

and a determined enemy to the Jacobin Government!—The motion was seconded by Colonel Tarleton, and supported by Mr. Fox and the other members of the Opposition. But the House did not at all enter into their feelings on the subject, nor yet consider the character of La Fayette in the same point of view with themselves. We had, however, no participation in the arrest of these patriots, which took place before we were engaged in the war; and, consequently, we could have neither right nor pretext to interpose in their behalf. It was pertinently asked, on what ground we could pretend to interfere?—What charter could we produce for being guardians of the consciences and councils of the potentates of Europe?—And it was aptly remarked, as being singular, that this recommendation should come from those who denied the right of interfering in the affairs of France; who, when they heard of the murder and imprisonment of thousands in Paris, and were themselves daily witnesses of the afflictions of the emigrant priests and nobles, could suppress their philanthropy, because it was wrong to meddle with the concerns of an independent state.

Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham were particularly distinguished, in this debate, for the keen irony, and happy sarcasm, which they directed against those spurious philanthropists, who could contemplate, with calm indifference, the murder and misery of persecuted royalists, while their most tender sensibility was excited by the sufferings of patriotic reformers, whose wild and visionary schemes had brought their Monarch to the scaffold, and their country to desolation and wretchedness! In the course of their argument, the Opposition had laid a great stress on the inconsistency of guaranteeing the Constitution of 1789 to the inhabitants of Toulon, while its founder, La Fayette, was consigned to a prison. Mr. Pitt, therefore, entered into an explanation of the transaction at Toulon.—He stated that Lord Hood had promised protection to the inhabitants, if they would make an explicit declaration in favour of monarchy. They declared for the Constitution of 1789, and begged him to keep the place in trust for Louis XVII.—He did so;—and the restoration of the place at the conclusion of the war, was the extent of the engagement into which he entered.

With regard to the pretended attachment of the Royalists to La Fayette, there was no man, he believed, who less possessed the esteem of that party, and no man, certainly, less deserved it than he who first preached the doctrine of the sacred duty of insurrection against his Sovereign. Forty-eight members voted for the motion, and one hundred and fifty-five against it.

A motion, however, not so easily resisted, and supported by arguments much more plausive, and even cogent, was brought forward, on the 10th of April, by Major Maitland, respecting the failures and disasters of the last Campaign, at Dunkirk and at Toulon.—He imputed our want of success to a departure from the plan, originally settled by the Congress at Antwerp, for concentrating the combined force; the first instance of which departure was exhibited in the detached enterprize of the Duke of York against Dunkirk, which took forty thousand men from the Prince of Cobourg's army, and so compelled him eventually to raise the siege of Maubeuge.—Nor were the promptitude and dispatch, which all such detatched expeditions imperatively require, displayed on the present occasion. An unaccountable delay of four weeks took place after the surrender of Valenciennes. The Duke of York appeared before Dunkirk on a given day, when the gun-boats from England were appointed to meet him.—But through a culpable neglect, in the departments of the Ordnance and the Admiralty, not one of them appeared.—The consequence was the defeat of our troops, followed by a retreat, attended with the loss of stores, cannon, and ammunition.

In regard to Toulon, he accused Lord Hood of having gained possession of the place on condition of restoring the constitution of 1789, and of having subsequently changed the terms, by promising the inhabitants, in his declaration, only such a government as should be agreed on, which subjected them to the revival of their ancient despotism. He then landed only 1800 men to protect a line of fifteen miles against 10,000 men; and yet, notwithstanding the state of "comfortable security" in which Lord Mulgrave had professed to feel himself when he took the command, with an addition of 2000 men, he was

soon after unable to maintain himself, with 15,000, against the attacks of 35,000. Lord Hood was further charged with having, in the midst of these transactions, of his own accord, and without any instructions, sent four ships of the line to Brest, as a present to the enemy; and with having, at last, made a precipitate and shameful retreat, leaving thousands of the loyal inhabitants to glut the vengeance of the conquerors.

The *facts* advanced in opposition to these charges, which no reasoning, and nothing but *facts*, could repel, were these:—That the attack of Dunkirk was undertaken with the full concurrence of the Duke of York, and of the other commanders on the Continent, who approved both of the time and mode of its execution. That its capture was an object highly desirable, and was prevented solely by the uncommon efforts of the enemy, who, with surprising expedition, collected an immense force, sufficient to beat the covering army, under Marshal Freytag; to which circumstance alone, and not to the want of naval co-operation, was the failure of the attempt to be attributed.—No blame could attach to the Ordnance Department, for the gun-boats were fitted out with the greatest possible expedition, and arrived at the place of destination only two days after the appointed time. The retreat from Dunkirk was stated to be orderly and slow; the number of cannon left behind was only thirty-eight, and all of iron; and the diversion which this expedition created produced the fall of Quesnoy.

But, notwithstanding this defence, the expedition to Dunkirk appears to have been ill-conceived, and worse conducted. The importance of keeping the combined army united, in order to make the desired impression on the French, who always acted in one immense and compact body, was self-evident; and the separation of 40,000 men could not fail to fetter its operations, and to defeat its grand object. Admitting, however, what cannot be denied, that the acquisition of Dunkirk was most desirable, in order to secure a safe port for our vessels, and an open communication with the continent, which might, with proper precautions, be defended against any force which could be brought against it, it was an operation that ought to have

been executed as soon as conceived; not a moment, at least, should have been lost, after the reduction of Valenciennes, in making the attempt; and it should have been made with a force amply sufficient to ensure its success. All other objects should, for the moment, have been sacrificed to this, to which the undivided attention of the whole army should have been directed.—But, by the injudicious plan of carrying on offensive operations in two different quarters, at the same time, the allies were defeated at both points. Besides, by the tardiness of the proceedings after the attack was begun, the enemy had ample time to throw what reinforcements he chose into the town, to adopt every measure of defence, and to collect an immense force, sufficient to overwhelm, as it were, the besieging and covering armies; whereas, it is certain that, when the British army first approached the place, it was very badly provided with all the means of resistance, and would, in all probability, have been unable to withstand a prompt and vigorous assault.

In answer to the charges on the subject of Toulon, it was observed, on the part of Ministers, that almost the whole of that plan was conducted without any communication with the cabinet; and that the speedy collection of 17,000 men, in the midst of other military operations of great importance, was a sufficient proof of their zeal and diligence in promoting its success. Lord Mulgrave, on his part, denied that the restoration of the constitution of 1789 was understood, by either party, as a definitive arrangement. In respect to the siege, instead of a line of fifteen miles, as asserted, the farthest post was not two miles distant from the centre of Toulon;—and his situation was such as fully to justify the expression of his security at the time when it was used. Cataux's army, though amounting to 10,000 men, consisted of the worst troops in France. Lyons had not then yielded to the authority of the Convention;—and he was given to expect a co-operation on the part of the Piedmontese general, De Vins. Still, though disappointed in his expectations, had the garrison of Toulon been wholly composed of British troops,—he was confident of his ability to hold the place till that very hour.

Mr. Pitt undertook the defence of Lord Hood against the charges which affected him personally.—The four ships which had been sent to Brest contained six thousand republican seamen, who were riotous, ungovernable, and, avowedly, hostile to the English; and it was thence absolutely necessary to send away one part of the fleet in order to secure the other. The evacuation of the town, and the destruction of the ships and magazines, were executed in a manner which claimed the highest praise;—and he averred, in the most solemn manner, that not a single person was left behind who wished to leave the place. As to the massacres which followed, they had been so general throughout France, as to afford a strong presumption that attachment to the English was not, in this particular instance, the cause of them. The House were satisfied with these reasons, and rejected the motion for an inquiry by a hundred and sixty-eight votes against thirty five.

A new subsidiary treaty had lately been concluded with Prussia, who had evinced a strong disposition to desert the confederacy which she had been the most anxious to promote.—That it was wise to prevent this desertion by pecuniary sacrifices, in the present state of affairs on the Continent, must be obvious to all, who consider the stake for which Great Britain and her allies were contending; that it was more consistent too, both with policy and with economy, to pay for his troops than to raise men at home for the same purpose, is equally manifest. By this treaty, the Prussian Monarch engaged to supply 62,000 men to co-operate with the allies, on condition of receiving the sum of 400,000*l.* for their equipment, and a further sum of 50,000*l.* a month, during their service; which, with other necessary expences, would form a total of 1,800,000*l.*, of which the States-General, who were parties to the treaty, had agreed to pay 400,000*l.*

This treaty, when submitted to Parliament, was strongly oppossed in both Houses; in the Upper House, however, only six peers divided against it. It was discussed, in the Lower House, on the 30th of April, when it was defended by Mr. Pitt, chiefly on the two grounds above stated—the economy of the arrangement, and the propriety of

employing foreign troops in preference to British on such a service. On the other hand, both the policy and the economy of the measure were impeached by the Opposition, who contended that we were paying the King of Prussia for fighting his own battles; that, compared with the subsidy to Sardinia, the sum to be advanced to him was exorbitant; and that, by this step, he had ceased to be a principal in the war. But, however reprehensible the conduct of the King of Prussia might be, and unquestionably was, the true point for consideration was, whether, in the actual state of the war, it was prudent and politic to pay for his support, which by no other means could be ensured. The House decided that it was, and thirty-two members in vain protested against this decision.

The eccentric conduct of the noble president of the Revolution Society, who had adopted all the wild and destructive notions of the French Revolutionists, had manifested itself in various ways, and on various occasions; but in no instance had it assumed a more marked and decisive character, than in a long speech which he delivered in the House of Lords, on the 4th of April, when he loudly condemned the war, reprobated the *cruel* and *horrid* object of it—the restoration of Monarchy in France; and was guilty of a most horrible perversion of Scripture, by quoting nearly the whole of the eighth chapter of the First Book of Samuel, in order to prove that Kings were considered by the Sacred Writers, and by God himself, as a curse upon mankind! In such violent and indecent terms was the resolution drawn up, which he introduced at the close of his speech, that the Lord Chancellor, with the unanimous approbation of the House, declined to read the preamble; and declared, that if the noble Earl had used the same language in any other place, it *would have called for exemplary punishment!*

The historian would ill discharge his duty, if he suffered such a declaration to pass *sub silentio*. That every possible allowance is to be made for unguarded expressions used, in the heat of debate, by members of the Great Council of the State, the freedom of debate, so essential to the preservation of constitutional freedom, imperiously

requires; but that any member of either House should be allowed to commit a deliberate breach of the laws, and to utter sentiments, and to use language, coolly and spontaneously, not in a reply, but on a subject purposely introduced by himself, which would expose any other person to a criminal prosecution, it is impossible to admit. The rights and privileges of the members of both Houses of Parliament are sufficiently extensive, and defined with sufficient clearness; but without a gross perversion of terms it is not possible to give such a latitude of comprehension to the "freedom of debate," which is one of their undoubted privileges, secured to them by their Sovereign, at the opening of every Parliament, as to include the right of uttering a gross libel, not extorted by the remarks of others, not provoked by any discussion calculated to produce warmth and irritation, but a cold, premeditated libel, which would subject any other person to exemplary punishment. There is no law to justify such an exemption;—it is repugnant to justice,—and at variance with the spirit and principles of the British constitution. Neither the end for which the freedom of debate was originally sanctioned, nor the object which it is intended to secure, could justify its extension to the unwarrantable conduct of Earl Stanhope on the present occasion;—whose words ought certainly to have been taken down for the purpose of instituting some ulterior proceeding against him.

Such, however, was the indignation of the House, on hearing this infamous resolution read, that Lord Grenville said he would not insult the understandings of their Lordships, nor his own, by entering into any argument against it. And, after it had been negatived by every voice in the House, except Lord Stanhope's, he said that, as the object was evidently to place the language on record, he hoped to defeat it by moving, that the resolution be expunged from the journals of the House. Lord Stanhope's remonstrances against this motion were vain, and it passed without a dissentient voice.—But three days after, a Scottish peer was found, to adopt the sentiments of his Lordship, and to censure the House for their conduct. It will easily be imagined that this Peer was the Earl of Lauderdale, the friend of Brissot. He complained that the privileges of the House had been

grossly violated by the omission of Lord Stanhope's preamble, when the resolution was read from the Chair; and, after much declamation on the subject, he moved, "That every motion proposed by any Lord "of Parliament, and given to the Speaker of that House, ought to be "just in the words given by the mover; and the question of *content* "or *not content* decided upon it in that form." This, as a general proposition, was admitted to be a truism; but it was contended, at the same time, that the House had a discretionary power to alter the words, or form, of any motion, at the suggestion of the Chair; and that, in the present instance, this power was exercised, for the approbation of the House was unequivocally expressed. To get rid of the question, therefore, without affecting the principle, a motion for adjournment was made and carried.

CHAPTER XXV.

Increased audacity of the Seditious Clubs—General meeting of the London Corresponding Society—Seditious resolutions of the Society for Constitutional Information—Inflammatory address of the Corresponding Society—Indicate the necessity of redress, and the means of obtaining it—Resolve to assemble a General Convention of the People—This address approved, and circulated by the Constitutional Society—Committees appointed, and seditious publications distributed—Public Meetings—Means adopted for supplying the disaffected with Arms—The Secretaries, and several Members of the Societies, are apprehended, and committed for trial—Their papers and books laid before the House of Commons—A Committee appointed to examine them—First report of the Committee brought up by Mr. Pitt—His speech on the subject—He traces the origin and progress of the Societies—Their connection with France—With the British Convention at Edinburgh—Proposed Convention intended to supersede the Parliament, and to exercise full Legislative powers—Mr. Pitt moves for leave to bring in a Bill to enable his Majesty to arrest and detain all persons suspected of treasonable conspiracies for a limited time—Opposed by Mr. Fox—He defends the Societies as friends of peace—Maintains the legality of their conduct—Approves of a Convention—Considers the Bill as destructive of the Constitution—Is followed by Mr. Grey and Mr. Sheridan—The latter calls the Secret Committee, *the Committee of Public Safety*, and styles Mr. Pitt, *the British Barrere*—Motion carried by two-hundred-and-one votes to thirty-nine—Bill opposed on the third reading—Mr. Grey's Speech—Vindicates the conduct of the Societies—Abuses Mr. Pitt—Mr. Pitt vindicated from Mr. Grey's charge of duplicity and apostacy—False assertions of the Opposition corrected by Mr. Dundas—Mr. Sheridan threatens to desert his duty in Parliament if the Bill passes—Mr. Windham ridicules the arguments of Opposition, and calls them *a Committee of Jacobins*, and *Partisans of Anarchy*—Angry Speech of Mr. Fox—Avows his preference of *the most unjust peace* over *the most just war*—Regards the Bill as holding out encouragement to our foreign and domestic enemies—Bill defended by Mr. Pitt—The fallacy and evil tendency of Mr. Fox's arguments demonstrated—The Seditious Clubs entertain a different opinion of the Bill from that *avowed* by Mr. Fox—Bill passed by one-hundred-and-forty-six to twenty-eight votes—Carried in the House of Peers by one-hundred-and-eight to nine—Second Report of the Secret Committee—Joint Address of the two Houses on the same—Mr. Sheridan proposes a Bill for enabling Roman Catholics to hold commissions in the Army and Navy, by abolishing the existing test, and by substituting a new oath in its stead—Mr. Dundas moves the previous question, which is carried without a division—Mr. Fox expresses his approbation of the abolition of all tests—Lord Hawkesbury's Bill for enforcing the Navigation Laws—Prosperous state of Commerce—Increase of Shipping and Seamen—Indian Budget opened by Mr. Dundas—Increased prosperity of

the East-India Company—Resolutions moved by Mr. Fox, condemning the war and censuring the conduct of Ministers—Contends for the impolicy of demolishing the system of Jacobinism, without having some adequate substitute prepared—Magnifies the resources of France, and depreciates those of Great Britain—Encourages the Seditious Clubs to continue their meetings—Recommends an immediate negotiation for peace—Is supported by Mr. Sheridan, who declares all the traitorous designs, imputed by the Secret Committee to the Clubs, to be *fabulous plots*, and *forged conspiracies*—The Committee vindicated by Mr. Pitt against the false aspersions of Mr. Sheridan—Mr. Pitt is called to order—Unsteady conduct of the Speaker—Mr. Pitt answers Mr. Fox—Proves him to have contradicted his own avowed principles on the question of interference—Previous question carried by two-hundred-and-eight against fifty-seven—Similar resolutions moved, and rejected, in the House of Peers—The leaders of the Whig Party accept situations under Government—Their conduct explained and defended—Attacked by Mr. Sheridan—His panegyric on Mr. Fox—Its value estimated—Mr. Pitt's Speech—Exposes the fallacy of Mr. Sheridan's statements—Ridicules the notion of his own unpopularity in America—Expresses a hope that he may be always as unpopular with Jacobins as Mr. Sheridan is popular with them—Opposition to Jacobinism the best basis of popularity—Mr. Pitt explains the grounds of the union between the Whig-leaders and the Ministry—Vindicates their principles, and unfolds their policy—Parliament prorogued—View of the conduct of Opposition during the Session—Its tendency to inspirit the enemy and to encourage the disaffected—Probable motives and designs of Mr. Fox—Contrast between his conduct and that of Mr. Pitt.

[1794.] The conviction of the persons tried for sedition, in Scotland, far from having the effect of stopping the progress of disaffection in the southern parts of the island, seems to have inspired its votaries with fresh confidence, and with greater boldness;—at least, such must be supposed to have been the case, if their disposition were to be inferred from their language in private, and their professions in public. The leaders of the two great Societies in London, the Constitutional and the Corresponding, directed their aspiring views to nothing less than the formation of a popular legislature, not only distinct from, but directly opposed to, the constitutional legislature. On the 20th of January, the London Corresponding Society had a public meeting, and a public dinner, in announcing which to their members and adherents, they endeavoured to impress on their minds the necessity of some strong and decisive resolutions. In the letter which their Secretary addressed to the Secretary of the Constitutional Society, it was observed—"It is now time for us to do something worthy of men; " —the brave defenders of liberty, south of the English Channel, are

" performing wonders,—driving their enemies before them, like chaff " before the whirlwind!" And the Constitutional Society, in certain resolutions, passed on the 17th of January, compared the Scottish judges, who had convicted their friends, to Judge Jeffreys, and threatened him with a similar fate.*

At a meeting of the Corresponding Society, which was most numerously attended, a spirit, perfectly conformable with the views of those who had called it, was displayed; a violent Address to the people of

* These resolutions, which were passed after the conviction of the persons tried for sedition in Scotland, speak a language, at once so bold and so plain, as to remove every doubt as to the intentions of those who framed them, from the mind of scepticism itself.—" Resolved, " That law ceases to be an object of obedience, whenever it becomes an instrument of " oppression."

They had repeatedly declared, that the prosecutions and sentences for seditious practices were gross acts of oppression; and, therefore, it follows, of necessity, that, in their estimation, the time had actually come, when they were exempted from all obedience to the laws.

" Resolved, That we call to mind, with the deepest satisfaction, the merited fate of the " infamous Jeffreys, once Lord Chief Justice of England, who, at the æra of the glorious " Revolution, for the many iniquitous sentences which he had passed, was torn to pieces by " a brave and injured people.

" Resolved, That those who imitate his example deserve his fate.

" Resolved, That the Tweed, though it may divide countries, ought not, and does not, " make a separation between those principles of common security, in which Englishmen " and Scotchmen are equally interested; that injustice in Scotland is injustice in England; " and that the safety of Englishmen is endangered, whenever their brethren in Scotland, *for* " *a conduct which entitles them to the approbation of all wise, and the support of all brave,* " *men,* are sentenced to Botany Bay;—a punishment hitherto inflicted only on felons.

" Resolved, That we see with regret, but we see without fear, that the period is fast " approaching, when the liberties of Britons must depend, not upon reason, to which they " have long appealed, not on their powers of expressing it, but on their firm and undaunted " resolution to oppose tyranny by the same means by which it is executed."

This resolution contains a direct and explicit threat to oppose the laws by force.—Reason and argument having, according to them, failed to produce the desired effect, recourse must be had to means of compulsion.

" Resolved, That we approve of the conduct of the British Convention, who, though " assailed by force, have not been answered by arguments; and who, unlike the members of " a certain assembly, have no interest distinct from the common body of the people.

" Resolved, That a copy of the above resolutions be transmitted to Citizen Skirving, " Secretary to the British Convention, who is now imprisoned under colour of law in the " Tolbooth of Edinburgh."—*First Report Com. of Sec.* p. 11, 12.

Great Britain and Ireland, containing a long detail of imaginary grievances, including the Irish Convention Act, and the suppression of the Scotch Convention, was read, approved, and 10,000 copies of it ordered to be printed and circulated. In this address, language was used too plain to be misunderstood, and unfolding views which admitted not of misconception or doubt. Its framers taught their English followers to believe, that the same persecution which the *patriots* of Scotland and Ireland had experienced would be extended to them. —It was one and the same corrupt, and corrupting influence, which now domineered in Ireland, Scotland and England. Could it be believed that those who had sent virtuous Irishmen and Scotchmen, fettered with felons, to Botany Bay, did not meditate, and would not attempt, to send them to the same place?—Or, if they had not just cause to apprehend the same inhuman treatment; if, instead of the most imminent danger, they were in perfect safety, from it, should they not disdain to enjoy any liberty, or privilege whatever, in which their honest Irish and Scotch brethren did not equally, and as fully, participate with them? Their cause, then, was the same with their own; and it was both their duty and their interest to stand or fall together. The Irish Parliament, and the Scotch Judges, actuated by the same English influence, had brought them directly to the point. There was no further step beyond that which they had taken. They were at issue. They must now choose, at once, either liberty or slavery for themselves and their posterity. Would they wait till *barracks* were erected in every village, and till *subsidized* Hessians and Hanoverians were upon them?

Having thus insisted on the necessity of redress, they next proceeded to consider the question, which they supposed might naturally occur to their followers,—by what means was redress to be sought?—To this they answered, that men in a state of civilized society were bound to seek redress of grievances from the laws, as long as any redress could be obtained by the laws. But the common master whom they served (whose law was a law of liberty, and whose service was perfect freedom) had taught them not to expect to gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. They must have redress from *their own laws*, and not

from the laws of their plunderers, enemies, and oppressors. *There was no redress for a nation, circumstanced as they were, but in a fair, free, and full representation of the people.*

It was here explicitly avowed and maintained, that their present state was a state of slavery; that they had a right to assemble a National Convention; and that the suppression of such illegal meeting, and the punishment of its leaders, were acts of tyranny which justified resistance;—that it was necessary to seek redress, not, however, from the existing laws, but from laws of their own, to be enacted by some legislative body of their own creation; and which could not, of course, be created without the utter destruction of the present constitution.—They also resolved, that the general Committee of the Society should meet every day during the sitting of Parliament, in order to watch its proceedings, and the conduct of the government.—And that, upon the first introduction of any bill, or motion, hostile to the freedom of the people,—such as, for landing foreign troops in Great Britain, or Ireland, for proclaiming martial law, or for preventing the people from meeting in societies for constitutional information, or any other *innovation* of a similar nature,—the general Committee should issue summonses to the delegates of each division, and also to the Secretaries of the different Societies *affiliated* and *corresponding* with their Society, immediately to assemble a *general convention of the people*, to be holden at such place, and in such manner, as should be specified, by the Committee, in their summons.

The Society for constitutional information gave their formal assent and sanction to these proceedings; and, on the 24th of January, resolved, that the seditious address, which they termed EXCELLENT, should be inserted in their book of minutes, and the King's speech to *his* Parliament immediately under it. Committees of co-operation were appointed for more closely uniting the two Societies; and as they inferred the fears of government from its apparent supineness, they grew bolder in their language, and became more explicit and determined in their threats. They called in the aid of the press—established a "London Corresponding Society's Magazine," for the promulgation

of their principles; and circulated hand-bills, songs, and cheap publications, of every description, without number. They devoted several political characters, and Mr. Pitt at the head of them, to popular vengeance; they vowed the destruction of the King, the Royal Family, the Nobility, and the Episcopacy;—and, at their meetings, talked of a Revolutionary Tribunal, as the only court adapted to the present state of the country. They encouraged the idea of assembling a National Convention, on a more extensive scale, to be formed of delegates from all the popular clubs; and to be assembled on a central spot, which was already determined.

The Society of Friends of the People expressed their disapprobation of this last proposal, but the plan was, nevertheless, pursued with undiminished zeal, and unabated ardour. Public meetings were called in the open air;—the fields, in the vicinity of the metropolis, became the scenes of political debate;—and democratic orators were sent to enlighten the manufacturers of Sheffield, Leeds, and Wakefield.—Resistance to government was plainly and strongly enforced, in harangues, peculiarly calculated to mislead and inflame the minds of the ignorant multitude;—orders were given for making a large quantity of pikes;—and methods were employed, though not to any extent, for training men to the use of arms. At this period, the hopes of the disaffected were raised to the highest pitch. They conceived that government was awed into inactivity; and they inferred, however unjustly, certainly not unnaturally, nor illogically, from the language and conduct of the Opposition, that they were extremely well disposed to favour their cause.

Government, however, though apparently passive, were not idle.—They had closely watched all their proceedings, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to make them feel the vengeance of the law. Having at length obtained, as they thought, sufficient proof to convince the public, and to establish the guilt of the offenders, Ministers resolved to act. A considerable number of military weapons were seized in Edinburgh; and, in London, Hardy, the Shoemaker, and Adams, the Secretaries to the two leading Societies, were apprehended,

and their books and papers secured. From the contents of these documents, warrants were issued for the arrest of several other persons; and, after being examined by the Privy Council, the following were committed for trial:—Thomas Hardy, and Daniel Adams, Mr. John Horne Tooke, the Reverend Jeremiah Joyce, Chaplain and Secretary to Lord Stanhope, and tutor to his eldest son; John Thelwall, a political lecturer, and a most active member of the London Corresponding Society; John Augustus Bonney, an Attorney; and John Richter and John Lovett.

On the same day (the 12th of May) on which these persons were apprehended, Mr. Dundas brought down to the House of Commons a message from his Majesty, informing the House, that seditious practices had been carried on, to an alarming extent, by certain seditious Societies in London, in correspondence with Societies in different parts of the country, tending to subvert the laws and constitution of the kingdom, and introductory of the system of anarchy prevailing in France; and concluding with a recommendation to the House to adopt such measures as to them might appear necessary.

The next day the books and papers of the Societies, which had been seized, were laid before the House, and, on the motion of Mr. Pitt, were referred to a committee of secrecy, in conformity with a precedent, supplied in the case of Layer's plot, in 1722. Mr. Fox's *constitutional* vigilance and jealousy led him to enquire by what means the papers had been obtained, reminding the House, that it had been declared, in Wilkes's case, that the seizure of papers, except for treason or felony, was illegal.—He obtained, however, a satisfactory answer from Mr. Dundas, who informed him that the warrants were granted for treasonable practices.

The committee was chosen by ballot, on the 14th of May; and, on the 16th, Mr. Pitt brought up the first report, which contained a history of the Society for Constitutional Information, and of the London Corresponding Society, from the year 1791, with a general view of their proceedings from that period to the present time. Acting as the organ

of the committee, Mr. Pitt entered into an explanation of their sentiments, and of their proceedings. He said that they had formed their opinion of the papers submitted to their examination with the greatest expedition, and their report stated, so fully and particularly, those circumstances which, in the judgment of the committee, required the immediate attention of Parliament, that he felt it scarcely necessary for him to do more than shortly to recapitulate the different objects to which that report applied, and the various particulars which came under consideration.

The report, so expeditiously laid before the House, contained a general view of the transactions referred to the committee, without waiting for a more minute investigation of the subject. It appeared to them, that a plan had been digested and acted upon, and, at that moment, was in forwardness towards its execution, the object of which was nothing less than to assemble a pretended convention of the people, for the purposes of arrogating the character of a general representation of the nation; of superseding, in the first place, the representative capacity of the House of Commons; and of assuming, in the next place, the legislative power of the country at large. If the circumstances, contained in the report, should impress the minds of the House with the same conviction with which they had impressed the minds of the committee, there would be no doubt but that they would lead to the same practical conclusion; namely, that if such designs existed, if such designs had been acted upon, and were in a state of forwardness, there was not one moment to be lost in arming the executive power with those additional means which might be adequate to impose an effectual check upon the further progress of such a plan, and to prevent it from being carried into final execution.

Mr. Pitt impressed on the House the necessity of bearing in their recollection, in their consideration of the report, that a great part of it was merely introductory; and that, though it referred to transactions of a date long antecedent to the period in which the acts of the Societies implicated had assumed the serious aspect of practical treason; and though they were notorious, it was, nevertheless, necessary to bring

them forward again to observation, in order to supply a clue for unravelling the complicated circumstances of the plan,—and, by comparing and combining them with the subsequent proceedings of the individuals concerned, to shew that, from the beginning, their views were the same, and that the pretext of reform, under which they masked their purpose, was far from being the real object of their pursuits. The committee had been so limited, in point of time, that they had been unable methodically to digest, or practically to point out, the various minute parts of the great and momentous business before the House. The committee, however, anxious to afford all practicable information, and to throw all possible light upon the subject, and to indicate the daily increasing approximation of danger, had kept in view the great object, the leading design, of the plan.

The papers found, as far as related to that part of the conspiracy, which immediately implicated the Corresponding Society, and the Society for Constitutional Information, contained a correspondence, for two years, with various other Societies in this country and in France; and from these, coupled with their subsequent and more recent proceedings, it was evident that these Societies, which would be found now intent on assembling a convention, had had such a measure in contemplation from the very beginning; that it was conceived so long ago as two years before; was openly avowed in their correspondence, but was kept in reserve to be reduced to practice whenever a fit opportunity should occur. This whole system of insurrection would appear, from the papers referred to, to be founded on the modern doctrine of the Rights of Man;—that monstrous doctrine by which the weak and ignorant, who were most susceptible of impression from such barren and abstract propositions, were attempted to be seduced to overturn government, law, property, security, religion, order, and every thing valuable in this country, as men, acting upon the same ideas, had already overturned and destroyed every thing in France, and disturbed the peace, and endangered the safety, if not the existence, of every nation in Europe. Whatever arguments, against the cautionary measures adopted to prevent the evil effects of that pernicious doctrine, might be grounded on the contemptible situation of the authors, and

on the absurdity of the principles of those books in which it was inculcated; yet, allowing the one to be as contemptible as the others were absurd, it was no light or trivial circumstance, when notions were deduced from it, of the most alarming nature, which were sedulously promulgated, and eagerly adopted, by large bodies of people; and when the proceedings of all these Jacobin Societies would appear (as the papers before the House fully demonstrated) to be only comments on that text;—a text for the inculcation of which those Societies were the disciples here, as their corresponding French brethren were the instruments for disseminating it in France, and for extending it, by carnage and slaughter, to all other parts of Europe.

Prior to the enormities committed in France, it would appear that a correspondence had been carried on between these Societies and the Jacobin club in Paris, and that delegates were sent from them to the National Convention, and received formally by that Assembly; and that, at the very moment when the Jacobin faction, which usurped the government of that country had commenced hostilities against Great Britain, those Societies had still, as far as they could, pursued the same conduct, expressed the same attachment to their cause, adopted their appellations, their forms of proceedings, and their language; and, in short, had formed a settled design to disseminate the same principles, and to scatter the same seeds of ruin in their own country. It would be found, not only that the most effectual plans which cunning could devise, had been laid for carrying this design into execution; but in the report would be seen a statement of the catalogue of the manufacturing towns marked out, as the most likely (from the vast concourse of ignorant and profligate men, who necessarily collect in such places) to adopt their plans; and corresponding Societies established there, to keep up and to extend the chain of seditious intercourse. In that catalogue would be found a well-chosen selection of the places of residence of those people who must be naturally supposed to be most ready to rise at the call of insurrection; who were most likely to be blinded by their artifices, and prejudiced by their professions; whose understandings were most subject to be misled by their doctrines, and rendered subservient to their views; and whom fraudful persuasion,

proneness to discontent, and the visionary and fallacious hope of improving their condition by any alteration of it whatever, would be most likely to congregate into an enormous torrent of insurrection, which would sweep away all the barriers of government, law, and religion, and leave our country a naked waste for usurped authority to range in, uncontrolled and unresisted.

Mr. Pitt next directed the attention of the House to the extraordinary manner in which these societies had varied their plans of operations,—sometimes acting in undisguised audacious hostility;—sometimes wearing the mask of attachment to the state and country;—one day openly avowing their intentions, as if purposely to provoke the hand of justice;—the next putting on the mask of reform, and asserting the utmost zeal for the preservation of the constitution. Their letter to the society at Norwich* contained a plain avowal of their object,

* *Extract of a Letter from the Secretary to the Society for Constitutional Information, to the Secretary to the United Political Societies at Norwich, dated 16th of April, 1793.*

"Where then are we to look for the remedy? To that Parliament of which we complain? To the Executive Power, which is implicitly obeyed, if not anticipated, in that Parliament? Or to ourselves, represented in some meeting of delegates for the extensive purpose of Reform, which we suppose you understand by the term CONVENTION?

"It is the end of each of these propositions that we ought to look to; and as success in a good cause must be the effect of perseverance, and the rising reason of the time, let us determine with coolness, but let us persevere with decision. As to a Convention, we regard it as a plan the most desirable, and the most practicable, so soon as the great body of the people shall be courageous and virtuous enough to join us in the attempt. Hitherto we have no reason to believe that the moment is arrived for that purpose. As to any petition to the Crown, we believe it hopeless in its consequences.—With respect to the last of your proposals, we are at a loss to advise.—If the event is looked to in the vote which may be obtained from that body, to whom this petition is to be addressed, which of us can look to it without the prospect of an absolute negative? In this point of view, therefore, it cannot require a moment's consideration. But if we regard the *policy* of such a petition, it may, in our apprehension, be well worth considering as a warning voice to our present legislators, and as a signal for imitation to the majority of the people. Should such a plan be vigorously and generally pursued, it would hold out a certainty to our fellow-countrymen that we are not a handful of individuals unworthy of attention or consideration, who desire the restoration of the ancient liberties of England; but, on the contrary, it might bring into light that host of well-meaning men, who, in the different towns and counties of this realm, are silently, but seriously, anxious for reformation in the government.

"We exhort you, with anxiety, to pursue your laudable endeavours for the common good, and never to despair of the public cause!"

an *apology for deigning to apply to Parliament;* and a candid, and sincere, confession, that not to the Parliament, not to the Executive Power, were they to look for redress, but to themselves, and to the convention which they proposed to erect. They afterwards recommended a perseverance in the petitions for reform, to be used as a cover to their designs, which they were to throw off at a proper time, when a period propitious to their views should arrive. Happily for this country, and for the whole world, they had, prematurely, supposed that period to be near at hand, and had, in consequence, thrown off the mask, at a time when the bulk of the nation were unanimously uniting with government in vigilance and care for its protection, and in the determination to oppose their efforts.

In their communication with the British Convention at Edinburgh, they styled that assembly the representatives of the people, clothed in all the right to reform; they sent delegates to it; and when some of the most active and mischievous of its members fell under the sentence of the law, they boldly asserted their innocence and their merits, in direct opposition to that law; paid every tribute of enthusiastic applause to the persons convicted by the verdict of juries legally constituted, and of respect to the Convention, pronouncing them objects of panegyric and envy. In conformity with their prior declarations, they made the legal condemnation of these guilty persons the signal, as they called it, of coming to *issue* on the point, "Whether the law should frighten them into compliance, or they oppose it with its own weapons —force and power?" That was to say, distinctly, whether they should yield obedience to the laws of their country, or oppose them by insurrection? This was as strong a case as the mind of man could well conceive,—yet it was only introductory to facts of a still stronger nature.

He now referred to the history of a society which, despicable and contemptible, though the persons who composed it were, as to talents, education, and influence, yet, when looked at with cautious attention, and compared with the objects which they had in view, and the motives on which they acted, namely, that great moving principle of all jaco-

binism,—the love of plunder, devastation, and robbery, which now bore the usurped name of liberty,—and that system of butchery and carnage which had been made the instrument of enforcing those principles, they would appear to be formidable, in exact proportion to the meanness and contemptibility of their characters. Of that society it was the characteristic, that, being composed of the lower orders of the people, it had within it the means of unbounded extension, and concealed in itself the seeds of rapid increase. It had already risen into no less than thirty divisions in London, some of them containing as many as six hundred persons, and was connected, by a systematical chain of correspondence, with other societies scattered through all the manufacturing towns where the seeds of those principles were laid, which artful and dangerous people might best convert to their own purposes. It would be proved, that this society had displayed an enormous degree of boldness, and had assumed to itself, in express terms, a power to watch over the progress of Parliament, to scan its proceedings, and prescribe limits for its actions, beyond which, if it presumed to advance, that august society was to issue its mandate, not only to controvert its proceedings, but to put an end to its existence; so that if the Parliament should think it necessary to oppose, by any act of penal coercion, the ruin of the constitution, that would be the war-whoop for insurrection; the means of defence would become the signal of attack, and the Parliament rendered the instrument of its own annihilation. Language like this, coming from people apparently so contemptible in talents, so mean in their description, and so circumscribed in their power, would, abstractedly considered, be supposed to deserve compassion, as the wildest workings of insanity; but the researches of the committee would tend to prove, that it had been the result of deep design, matured, moulded into shape, and ripe for mischievous effect, when opportunity should offer.

Alluding to the publication of a circular address, already noticed, Mr. Pitt considered it as a new æra in the history of insurrection, in which the House might contemplate those great machines of jacobinism, the societies referred to in the report. A deliberate and deep-concerted plan was then announced for actually assembling a Conven-

tion for all England,—not to be the representatives of these particular bodies for the accomplishment of any specific legal object, but to be the representatives of the whole body of the people of England, and evidently intended to exercise legislative and judicial capacities,—to overturn the established system of government,—and to wrest from the Parliament that power which the people and the constitution had lodged in their hands. The plan was to be carried into execution in a few weeks; it had been emphatically stated, that *no time was to be lost*; and lest, by any possibility, their ruinous intentions should be misunderstood, the circular letter was addressed equally to all parts of the island, and circulated with a degree of vigour, cunning, and address, truly astonishing. A central spot was declared to be fixed upon, although it was deemed unsafe to mention it, until assurances of fidelity should have been received from the persons to whom it was to be communicated;—and each separate society had been expressly enjoined to send an exact account of the number of its members, friends, and adherents, in order to form a correct estimate of their force.

If it were objected, that men of this description could not be expected to act with so much consistency and art, when it was found that their plans had been carried on with a degree of cunning and management which greater men, in worthier causes, had failed to manifest, such an objection could have no weight, opposed as it was by incontrovertible evidence. Every one who knew the nature of Jacobins, and of Jacobin principles, could not but see, in the pretences of Parliamentary Reform, held out by these societies, the arrogant claims of the same class of men, as those who lorded it in France, to trample upon the rich, and to crush every description of men, women, and children; the dark designs of a few, making use of the name of the people to govern all; a plan founded in the arrogance of wretches, the outcasts of society, tending to enrich themselves by depriving of property, and of life, all those who were distinguished either for wealth or for probity;—a plan which had been long felt by the unfortunate people of France in all its aggravated horrors, and which, he feared, would long, very long, continue to be felt by that ill-fated country.

The societies had continued to act upon this horrible plan,—and their proceedings at their meeting, on the 14th of April, exhibited no faint illustration of what they might be expected to do in the full majesty of power. In their resolutions they arraigned every branch of the government, threatened the Sovereign, insulted the House of Peers, and accused the Commons of insufficiency.—They noticed the measures of Parliament which were to serve as the signals of insurrection, —and declared that, if such measures should be adopted, they should be rescinded by the authority of the people; and they maintained that the constitution had been destroyed. Could there be a more explicit avowal of their views? The proofs of these allegations were to be found in their own authentic records, and in the express and deliberate avowal of their own deliberate acts, in their meditated system of insurrection. Such was the essence of the subject; and should the House be of opinion that this so deeply affected the safety and existence of Parliament itself, and so struck at the root of government and the constitution, as to demand interference, there were other matters in addition, which would contribute not a little to increase their impatience to baffle the views of the conspirators, and to stop the final execution of their projects. At the close of the report it was alleged, on grounds not light or trivial, though requiring further investigation, that *arms had been actually procured and distributed by these societies*, and were in the hands of those very people whom they had laboured to corrupt; and that, even at that time, instead of dissolving this formidable league, and disbanding this jacobin army, they had shewn themselves resolutely bent on the pursuit of their purpose, and displayed preparations of defiance and resistance to the measures of government.

In conclusion, Mr. Pitt observed, it was for the House to consider, with reference not to the quality of the persons, but to the nature and magnitude of the objects, what measures ought to be adopted? When the causes and proceedings were duly investigated, it would appear that so formidable a conspiracy had never before existed. The inquiry was yet far from complete, and, consequently, unfit for final decision.

The documents were so voluminous, that the committee had not been able to examine the whole of them with requisite attention, but they had deemed it necessary to shew the House what they had already done, which, in their apprehension, would supply sufficient grounds for the measure which he meant to propose,—a temporary suspension of the *Habeas-Corpus* law. As this great and essential benefit to the subject had been devised and provided for the preservation of the constitution, on the one hand, so, on the other, it could not exist if the constitution were destroyed. The temporary sacrifice of that law might, on certain occasions, be as necessary to the support of the constitution, as the maintenance of its principles was on all other occasions. It had been suspended, at a time when the constitution and liberty of the country were most peculiarly guarded and respected; and such a suspension was more particularly called for at this crisis, when attempts were made to disseminate, through the realm, principles and means of action which might produce much more lamentable effects, and, at last, require a remedy greater in extent, and more severe in operation, than the one now proposed. Such was the unanimous opinion of the committee. Mr. Pitt then moved, "for leave to bring in a bill to empower his Majesty to secure and detain all such persons as should be suspected of conspiring against his person and government."

This motion experienced the most active and determined resistance from Mr. Fox and his political adherents. The report was said to contain no one fact which had not long been the object of animadversion in the daily prints. Mr. Fox loudly condemned the inference drawn by the committee, that the object of these societies was to overthrow the government,—although never was an object more distinctly stated, or more explicitly avowed. He did not scruple to maintain, that, under the express terms of legal and constitutional methods, they had shewn themselves the friends of peace, and, in no one instance had they belied their professions.—Here Mr. Fox defended the societies upon the same grounds on which he defended his own party; and, indeed, identified their views and their objects, by representing these societies as pursuing legal methods to accomplish constitutional purposes; and, as friends to peace, whose conduct corresponded with their profes-

sions! He saw nothing formidable in a Convention; he had himself formerly belonged to a Convention of Delegates in Yorkshire, and elsewhere, who had petitioned Parliament; and, though the House had refused to acknowledge them in the character of delegates, they received their petition as the petition of individuals. The Roman Catholics in Ireland, too, had held a Convention, whose delegates were favourably received by his Majesty. He contended, then, that the proposed Convention of the Jacobins was strictly legal, and that it would be dangerous for the House to declare it otherwise. Even if their object were that which the committee had imputed to them, the measure now proposed was infinitely more mischievous, in the opinion of Mr. Fox, than the evil which it professed to remedy. It went to overturn the corner-stone of the constitution, and he should consider it his duty to oppose it in every stage.

The same line of argument was pursued by Mr. Grey, and other members of the same party.—Mr. Sheridan in particular, substituting wit for argument, invective for reason, and assertion for fact, attempted to throw the veil of ridicule over the proceedings of the committee, which he termed the Committee of Public Safety, while he styled Mr. Pitt the *British Barrere*. He expressed his disbelief of the existence of treasonable practices in the country; affirmed that Mr. Pitt was of the same opinion, and that his only aim was to create some new panic for the purpose of securing the continuance of his power over the people.

On the example cited by Mr. Fox, of the Irish Catholic petition, Mr. Burke observed, that Mr. Fox was not such a fool as not to be sensible of its irrelevancy;—for he was, undoubtedly, nothing less than a fool, except when he chose, like the elder Brutus, to assume the disguise of idiotcy, the better to assert the liberties of his country. The Irish Catholics did *not* hold a Convention, but presented a respectful petition to the House through a meeting of delegates. Their object was special and avowed, whereas the Convention to which the bill was referred intended to erect itself into a paramount power over the constituted authorities of the realm. The House seemed little

disposed to concur in the sentiments of the Opposition, who, upon a division, could only muster thirty-nine members, while two hundred and one voted for bringing in the bill.—The bill was then brought in, read a first and second time, and committed; and, the various clauses having been settled in the committee, the report was received by the House, and the bill was ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time the next day.—This was not done, however, without a continuance of that resistance which had been opposed to its introduction. Although the sentiments of the House were most decisively in favour of the measure, the Opposition, with a degree of captiousness and petulance, most unworthy of men exercising legislative functions, availed themselves of parliamentary forms to divide the House no less than twelve times, after the main question had been carried, and to protract the sitting till half past three in the morning.

This opposition was continued with still greater violence, on the following day, when the bill was read a third time. Mr. Grey then took the lead in it.—He accused the committee of being either deceived themselves, or of seeking to deceive others, and to make the House parties to the imposture. He vindicated the conduct of the societies by the example of the meetings, in 1782, held under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, and insisted that the object of both was the same,—to obtain Parliamentary reform; though nothing but the most absolute imbecility, or the most wilful blindness, could lead any one to suppose that the Jacobin Societies meant to limit their efforts to such an attempt: indeed, the assertion belied the declared sentiments of the societies themselves, as delivered in their circular addresses. Mr. Grey launched out into a strain of violent invective against the political conduct of Mr. Pitt, whom he accused of duplicity and apostacy throughout; while he declared his belief that the present measure was urged with so much dispatch, only because the Minister knew, that if he did not carry it by stealth, the public would not suffer it to pass at all. Mr. Pitt has been already defended against the charge of apostacy, as grounded on his sentiments and conduct on the subject of Parliamentary reform. It has been distinctly shewn, from his own explanations, that the object of *his* reform was totally different from the plan of Mr. Grey, and

as opposite to the projects of the seditious Societies, as *improvement* is to *destruction*. Never, too, was the charge of duplicity more grossly misapplied than it was to Mr. Pitt, whose whole conduct, both public and private, was open, ingenuous, and sincere.—He never shrunk from the avowal of his sentiments,—he was never afraid to support his principles; and that spirit of craft and dissimulation, out of which the line of conduct so falsely imputed to him could alone arise, was as foreign from his mind as the violence of party is from the zeal of patriotism, or the language of invective from the accents of truth. The indirect threat, at the close of Mr. Grey's observation, savoured not a little of the spirit of those seditious Clubs, whose conduct he so boldly vindicated; as it implied the existence of a popular power sufficient to controul and overawe the regular proceedings of Parliament.

In the course of the debate it was contended by the Opposition, as a reason for refusing to trust any additional power to them, that they had treated Messrs. Muir and Palmer, the Scotch convicts, with unexampled rigour, and had disregarded their humblest petitions for mercy. This falsehood, however, was immediately repelled by Mr. Dundas, who positively denied that any petition for mercy had been presented by either of the parties, and declared that every indulgence which could consistently be granted had been extended to them. It having been observed that when the Habeas-Corpus Act was suspended in 1715 and 1745, a rebellion raged in the country, Mr. Dundas replied, that it had been suspended no less than nine times since the Revolution, that no politician or historian had ever asserted, that the consequences of its suspension were injurious to the constitution; and most justly declared, that the landing of a foreign force, or an open rebellion, was much less dangerous, and less difficult to counteract, than the secret poison of domestic conspirators.

It was, nevertheless, most pertinaciously contended by Mr. Sheridan, that none of the precedents justified the present measure, which was likely to produce a real conspiracy, as the societies had only, in future, to pursue their object, whatever it might be, in a more cautious man-

ner, to elude the vigilance of government. This declaration involved a recommendatory hint, of which, no doubt, it was hoped by their advocates, the societies would avail themselves. Their sentiments, Mr. Sheridan asserted, sprang from the doctrines of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke, and the Duke of Richmond, whom he represented as ungenerous, for treating their proselytes with rigour. From whatever source their sentiments sprang, there can be no doubt that they were encouraged to persevere in them by the doctrines now held by Mr. Fox, Mr. Grey, and Mr. Sheridan. He lastly threatened the House, with the absence of himself, and his friends, in the event of the bill passing into a law.

Considerable surprise was testified by Mr. Windham, at the credulity of those who could suppose that Parliamentary reform was any thing else than a mask to conceal the most atrocious Jacobinical designs.—The reform intended, he compared to the sweeping amendments, not unusual in the House of Commons, which proposed to leave out every thing but the word "That." In ridicule of the fantastic notion of the similarity of Mr. Pitt's conduct to that of the French regicidal rulers, which had been advanced by the Opposition, he observed, that the similitude was the same as that of Captain Fluellin's hero, in Shakespeare, to Alexander the Great; because "there is a river in Macedon, and there is a river in Wales, and there is salmon in both." If, said he, gentlemen call us a "Committee of Public Safety," may we not call them a Committee of Jacobins? If we are accused of promoting despotism, may we not consider them as the partisans of anarchy. Severe as the retort was, it had full as much of truth as of sarcasm in it. Mr. Windham further observed, that the vigour of government must keep pace with the necessity of the times, and that, if the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act should be found inadequate to the purpose, more efficacious means must be tried.—This remark, the substance of which was, that government must do its duty, for, if it did not adopt efficacious measures for the security of the state, and the preservation of public order, it would fail in a most essential part of its duty, extorted a violent exclamation of displeasure from Mr. Fox. Good God! said he, what more is to be done after this? Will they proceed still further in their horrid mimicry of the.

Jacobin rulers of France? They might disclaim the comparison, if they pleased, but the resemblance was real. They, like them, fabricated stories of plots and conspiracies, and made terror the order of the day, to establish a tyrannical sway over the whole nation. He again expressed his belief that the Societies meant nothing more than a reform of Parliament; and for the people to watch over the conduct of Parliament no more proved a design to supersede its functions, than the vigilance of Parliament over the executive power indicated a disrespect for the person and authority of the Sovereign. He admitted, that recent events had produced a change in his mind, and had corrected several of his opinions. He had once despised the sentiment, "*Iniquissimam pacem justissimo bello antifero;*" but he was now prepared to say, that there was hardly any condition to which a people could be reduced which he would not rather endure than advise them to have recourse to arms. But, if the present system of oppression should be persisted in, the next step might be a privation of the trial by jury; and he did not know but he should prefer any change to such a tyranny as that. He insisted, that the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act would be not more iniquitous than impolitic. At home, it would exasperate the minds of the people, engender discontent, and stimulate them to resistance; while it would excite the greatest joy in France.—How triumphantly would Barrere adduce it as a proof of the truth of all the stories which he had propagated respecting England? How would their project of invasion be promoted by the news that an insurrection was ready to break out in their favour,—that the French party was become so formidable as to threaten the existence of government, and had driven it to the desperate resource of suspending the constitution, in order to counteract their efforts?

This florid declamation induced Mr. Pitt to make some remarks upon what he called the funeral oration which Mr. Fox had pronounced on the departed liberties of British subjects, which he stated to have expired with the introduction of the bill—a bill nothing worse, nor more dangerous in its consequences, than what had been known, from the experience and practice of our ancestors, to be a wise and proper measure, when required by the circumstances of the country.

He then called the attention of the House to the real state of the question before them.—Whether the danger with which the constitution of the country was threatened, by the practices now exposed, was, or was not, greater than any danger which could result from putting into the hands of the executive government a more than ordinary degree of power, for the purpose of resisting what they considered a very dangerous conspiracy? In answer to the preposterous assertion of Mr. Fox, that, if the bill passed, all the rights of the people, and all the privileges of Parliament, would be at once destroyed, he observed, that the bill was limited in its duration, that it was but a temporary measure, adapted to a present existing evil, and was to continue in force for little more than six months. It invested the executive government with a discretionary power to imprison suspected persons for that limited time, without bringing them to trial,—all the rights of the people, and all the privileges of Parliament, remaining uninterruptedly the same, attaching all the time the same responsibility upon Ministers to which they were liable in every other situation in which they acted, and rendering them equally answerable for any abuse of this power as they were for the abuse of any other discretionary power which was vested in them. This being the true state of the case, would any one pretend that it placed the country, and the Parliament, in such a situation as to make it a question, whether a member should desert his duty in Parliament, and abandon the interests of his constituents?

Upon what grounds the measures of government were compared to the conduct of the French rulers, it was impossible to conceive, as they who drew the comparison had never condescended to explain them.—Here a case had been stated, and clearly proved, of the existence of a party in the country, whose avowed system aimed at the destruction of all civilized order, the annihilation of Parliament, and the subversion of the constitution itself, by the introduction of Jacobinism, which had already proved so fatal to France, and which, at that moment, threatened the dissolution of every established government in Europe! Under these circumstances, it was proposed to prevent the calamitous effects of this dangerous conspiracy, by the adoption of a legal measure, limited in its duration, and which the experience and wisdom of our

ancestors had approved, and found highly beneficial.—How, then, could such a measure be compared with the conduct of the ruling power in France, miscalled a government?—A power which, to support its reprobated, detestable, and presumptuous usurpation, had recourse to every stratagem which fraud, robbery, and injustice, could suggest. It was unfair to impose any such comparisons on the House; for, in the present instance, nothing more was proposed to be done than to resist French crimes by opposing to them English principles; and it would not be said that there existed the least comparison, analogy, or imitation, between them.

Mr. Pitt then adverted to the extraordinary argument of Mr. Fox, that, because all the measures which had yet been taken had proved ineffectual to check the progress of the evil which they had been applied to remedy, we were, therefore, not to persevere in our endeavours to subdue it, by the application of means stronger and more efficacious. But it might, he said, be asked, whether, if those measures had not been adopted, and the vigilance of government exerted, the evils complained of might not have been much greater now than they really were? and whether, if no such steps had been taken, within the two last years, we should have enjoyed the same tranquillity which had prevailed during that period? The fact was, that without those measures, the scenes of mischief which had now been opened to the view, would have been, much earlier, brought to maturity. It had, however, been contended, that as the remedy applied had proved inefficacious, one of a different kind should be tried, and concession should succeed to severity. To this it was answered, that the progress of a Jacobin Convention, if once established in the country, could not be stopped, nor its consequences averted, by indulgence and concession;—remedies most unfit to be applied to so daring an attempt upon the existence of the constitution.—Indeed, the existence of the constitution was incompatible with such concession; besides, were Ministers so weak as to have recourse to it, the inutility of the attempt might be deduced from the declarations of the Societies themselves, who boldly rejected all compromise, and refused to be satisfied with any thing less than the total surrender of the British constitution. It was, therefore, evident that resistance,

and that of the strongest nature, was absolutely necessary, notwithstanding all that had been augured in so prophetic a strain in opposition to the adoption of severe measures, even in extreme cases.

As an argument against such measures, it had been asserted, by Mr. Fox, that persecution would never eradicate the principles of disaffection, and thence it was inferred, that it would be wiser to tolerate the opinions of the seditious Societies. But it was truly answered, by Mr. Pitt, that such conduct would amount to a toleration of the worst species of anarchy, sedition, and treason; and it might also have been observed, that the very toleration which Mr. Fox recommended to his Sovereign, had brought the King of France to the scaffold, and his kingdom to ruin. This observation forcibly obtrudes itself on the mind in reading the debates of this period, in which it clearly appears, that if Mr. Fox and his friends had been in power, and had acted in conformity with the principles which they professed in Parliament, they would have pursued the very same line of conduct which the weak Ministers of Louis XVI. had pursued; and, if they had not been productive of the same consequences, posterity would have had to thank the good sense of the nation, and not the wisdom of the Ministers, for their escape from the most dreadful of all human calamities.

To the trite question, where are you to stop in the pursuit of coercive measures?—Mr. Pitt had too much political wisdom, and was too much of a practical statesman, to give any answer which could *limit* government in the application of remedies to growing evils, and to say, thus far will we go, and no farther.—He entered his protest against a conduct so unwise and impolitic, and contented himself with declaring, that prosecution ought, in no instance, to extend beyond what the necessity of the case required; reserving the propriety of every future remedy to be discussed on its own separate merits. He deprecated, as irrelevant and unnecessary, the pompous declarations of the right of the people to assemble, for legal purposes, in a constitutional way, or to petition Parliament for the correction of abuses, or for the redress of grievances, such right having never been questioned, and having no connection whatever with the immediate subject of discus-

sion. He successfully exposed the falsehood of those who had represented his principles of reform to have been the same with those of the disaffected clubs;—he had fully declared his sentiments on the subject of a Parliamentary reform, the preceding year, and his opinions still remained unaltered; but surely no person would presume to say that there existed the most remote analogy between legal Societies for obtaining reform in Parliament, with an intention and a desire, legally and constitutionally, to improve the representation, and that Convention proposed by the Jacobin Societies, whose object, as proved by their own papers, was the destruction of Parliament, and not its improvement? The bulk of them did not even pretend that reform was either their view or their wish; it was neither in their mouths nor in their minds; nor did their actions correspond with the actions of men who wished well to their country. To assume, as a pretext for affording them any sanction, that their object was a legal and constitutional reform, was too ridiculous an idea to admit even of a moment's consideration;—as well might men talk of giving their sanction to legal conspiracy, and legal assassination, as imagine that those Societies had any legal or virtuous purpose whatever in their system!—Mr. Pitt read various extracts from the papers and minutes of the London Corresponding Society, and of the Society for Constitutional Information, in confirmation and support of his arguments and assertions; which tended, clearly and fully, to demonstrate, that their intention was not to appeal to Parliament for redress of their supposed grievances, but to proceed to acts of authority and control over the functions of Parliament.

The remedy now proposed, notwithstanding the odious colours in which it had been dressed, was nothing else than the imposition of a legal restraint upon criminal actions; and, in the opinion of Mr. Pitt, the present crime amounted to a conspiracy of such a nature as to supply an equal, if not a stronger, reason for the suspension of the *Habeas-Corpus* Act, than the cases of invasion and rebellion, to which frequent allusion had been made.—Though the efficacy of the measure had been denied by the Opposition, the members of the Societies, who were most likely to be affected by it, had entertained a different opi-

nion; for so much did they dread its operation, that they had expressly specified the suspension of the *Habeas-Corpus* Act as one of the signals of insurrection; and, as calling for the immediate meeting of the Convention. A stronger justification than this could not be assigned for the expedition with which the Ministers deemed it necessary to pass the Suspension-bill into a law. As to the inducement which the measure would hold out to the French to invade this country, it was considered, that the act was calculated to produce an opposite effect; for, certainly, the suppression of our domestic foes would be no very welcome intelligence to our foreign enemies.

This debate, which was carried on with considerable heat, was protracted to the hour of three on Sunday morning, when a division took place, and the bill was passed by 146 votes against 28.—It underwent some discussion in the House of Lords, to which the report of the Secret Committee of the Commons had been referred, where the measure was ably defended by Lord Grenville, Lord Barrington, the Earls of Abingdon, Caernarvon, and Mansfield, and the Duke of Leeds; and was strenuously opposed by Lord Lauderdale, Lord Derby, and the Marquis of Lansdowne. Lord Thurlow ridiculed the apprehensions expressed of the evil consequences likely to flow from the bill, which he represented as proceeding from inattention to its provisions. It gave no other power than that of postponing the trial of suspected persons for a certain time. All, therefore, that had been said of its being a revolutionary measure; that it was a full indemnity to Ministers; that it gave them the powers of Lettres-de-Cachet; was idle declamation. Nine Peers only voted against the bill; and one hundred and eight for it.—It, consequently, passed into a law.

The second report of the Secret Committee was produced to the House of Lords in the middle of June, by Lord Grenville, who expatiated at large on its contents, which furnished as good evidence as the nature of the case would admit of, that the intention of the Societies was to produce a Revolution in England, on French principles. His lordship closed his observations with a motion for an address to the King, expressing the concern of the House at this heinous conspiracy,

their wish to vest additional powers in the executive government, for the suppression of such crimes, and their readiness to give energy and vigour to the law. Notwithstanding the solitary opposition of Lord Lauderdale, the address was carried without a division, and it was resolved to desire the concurrence of the Commons thereto.—It was accordingly sent, without delay, to the Lower House, where the subject was taken into immediate consideration, the report of the committee being already before them. This report fully developed that part of the conspiracy which related to the providing of arms. In Scotland, this scheme had been brought to the greatest maturity; orders, to a considerable extent, having been given for the fabrication of pikes, and great numbers of persons being assembled, during the nights, to learn the use of them. That similar means of offence were preparing by the English Societies, appeared by the letters from the Society at Sheffield to Hardy, and to the Secretaries of the Norwich Society, containing an account of the proposed form and dimensions of the pikes. The pretext for obtaining a supply of these arms, was the danger to be apprehended from the introduction of foreign troops, and the violence of the opposite party. The report detailed so much of the proceedings, resolutions, addresses, and correspondence of the different Societies, as tended to prove, that they acted with one common design to assemble a general Convention, for the purpose of assuming the legislative power. They had declared, that no allegiance was due to a government not conducted by the representatives of the people; that the present Parliament were not the representatives of the people;—that they would petition them no more; and that they would seek for more effectual means to obtain redress. They had approved and adopted Paine's books on the Rights of Man, and inserted, in their minutes, copies of the speeches delivered by Barrere, Roland, and Jean Bon St. Andrè, in the French Convention, in January, 1793, which attribute Supreme power to a Convention, formed in the manner which they proposed.

In the appendix to the report were inserted authentic copies of all the documents which confirmed the facts, and justified the inferences maintained in the report itself.—Mr. Pitt, on moving the concurrence

of the House with the address of the Lords, entered into a brief analysis of the report, but expressed his readiness to enter into a more particular discussion, if any member should feel disposed to dispute any of its positions. After a few observations from Mr. Fox, and the Attorney-General, the motion passed without a division.

While this important business was pending in Parliament, and during the intervals of discussion, a measure was brought forward by Mr. Sheridan, similar to one very recently proposed; the proposal of which was productive of so much alarm, and of such serious consequences. He moved for leave to bring in a bill to enable Roman Catholics to serve as officers in the army and navy, by abolishing the existing test, and by substituting this form of oath in its stead.—"I, A. B. do swear, that I "will bear true allegiance to his Majesty, and defend his right to the "Crown, the laws and constitution of these kingdoms, and the succession to the throne, as by law established." The same plea was urged in defence of this motion, as was urged when a similar motion was brought forward in the House of Commons, in 1807;—that a bill had passed in Ireland, to admit Catholics to hold certain commissions in the army, but that it was nugatory in effect, until a similar act should be passed in England, because no Catholic officer could serve without subjecting himself to very severe penalties. At the same time it was acknowledged, that the bill for enabling the government to avail itself of the services of the French emigrants, had given birth to the present motion.—It was, however, objected by Mr. Dundas, that the bill went to repeal all religious tests whatever, a measure to which he believed the House would be little inclined to accede. At all events, it was a question of too much magnitude not to constitute the subject of a separate and serious discussion. He, therefore, moved the previous question, which was carried, after Mr. Fox had remarked, that the objection started by Mr. Dundas was the very ground on which the bill would have his warmest approbation.

Amidst the contentions of party, a subject more congenial to the feelings of all who truly love their country was introduced, in the House of Lords, by Lord Hawkesbury, who proposed a bill for en-

forcing the existing navigation laws, which had, of late, been shamefully evaded, in the principal object of regulation,—the proportion of British seamen required in the crews of our trading vessels;—that is *three-fourths*. In supporting his motion, his lordship took an able and most satisfactory view of our commercial history, from the earliest periods, and exhibited authentic accounts of the state of British shipping, in respect of tonnage, from the Restoration to the year 1792, by which it appeared, that from 1663 to 1669, it amounted only to 95,266 tons, and in the year 1792 to 1,329,979 tons.* No accurate account could be obtained of the progressive increase of British seamen; but it appeared, that in 1792, from the register under the *New Navigation Act*, that there were belonging to the British dominions, 16,079 ships of 1,540,145 tons, navigated by 118,216 British seamen, of which England alone employed 10,633 ships of 1,186,610 tons, and 87,569 men. It was mentioned, by his lordship, as a curious specimen of the growth of our navy, that the privateers, fitted out in the single port of Liverpool, during the American war, were nearly equal in ton-

* The following table shews the state of the tonnage at the different epochs.

		Tons.
The Restoration	1663— 9	95,266.
The Revolution	1688	190,533.
The Peace of Ryswick	1697	144,264.
The last years of William III.	1700— 1—2	273,693.
The wars of Queen Anne	1709—12	285,156.
The first years of George I.	1713—15	421,431.
The first of George II.	1726—28	432,832.
The peaceful years	1736— 8	476,941.
The war of	1739—41	384,191.
The peaceful years	1749—51	609,798.
The war of	1755—57	451,254.
The first of George III.	1760	471,241.
War	1761	508,220.
The peaceful years	1764—66	639,872.
Ditto	1772— 4	795,943.
The American war	1775— 7	760,798.
The French war	1778	657,283.
The Spanish war	1779	590,911.
The Dutch war	1781	547,953.
The peaceful years	1784— 6	926,780.
Ditto	1790— 2	1,329,979.

nage to the whole fleet equipped by Elizabeth, in 1588, to oppose the Spanish armada, which consisted only of 31,985 tons, and 15,272 men, while the other measured 30,787 tons, and were manned by 8,754 seamen. No opposition was made to this salutary bill, which very soon passed into a law. About the same time, a very satisfactory account of the prosperous state of the British territories, in India, was given to the House of Commons by Mr. Dundas, in the exhibition of his annual budget, by which it appeared, that, in the course of the preceding year, the Company's affairs had experienced a net improvement of nearly sixteen hundred and seventy thousand pounds, after the payment of half a million to the British government.

The attention of Parliament, however, was soon recalled from the contemplation of these naval, commercial, and political advantages, to a new discussion of questions, already decided in the most solemn and deliberate manner.—On the 30th of May, Mr. Fox, having embodied all the objections of his little party in certain resolutions, submitted them to the House of Commons, for the double purpose of affording himself and his associates another opportunity for the declaration of their sentiments on public affairs, and of recording these proofs of their political wisdom on the minutes of the House, for the benefit of posterity. The war, its object, its progress, the means of carrying it on, the subsidiary treaties, and the conduct of our allies, were all pressed into this compendium of party politics, which further contained the important discovery, that a secure peace was attainable by the British government, and ought to be attained; and that the proper means of attaining it was an explicit disavowal of interference in the internal affairs of France, or, at least, a distinct specification of the nature and extent of that interference. In supporting these extraordinary resolutions, which could answer no one good purpose, and the sole tendency of which, supposing them capable of making any impression, was to dispirit our allies, and to encourage our enemies, both foreign and domestic, all the old topics of declamation were renewed, accompanied, as usual, by many invidious personalities, and stale invectives. It was contended that it was highly impolitic to demolish Jacobinism, without specifying the system of govern-

ment to be adopted in its stead; and the restoration of monarchy, without declaring which of the monarchical constitutions of France was referred to, was asserted to be so vague and unsatisfactory, as to deter even the royalists of France from contributing to the success of the scheme.—Our situation was represented to be most gloomy, and even hopeless;—our force was stated to be daily diminishing, and our resources to be rapidly wasting away; while those of the French were increasing in strength, and extending in number. What the party, however, wanted in accuracy, they supplied in candour; for it was openly admitted, that they had no hope of inducing the House to pass the resolutions; but they expected one *good* to arise out of the discussion;—namely, that it would lead the people seriously to reflect on the evils which surrounded them, induce them to assemble, *perhaps in the course of the summer*, in a legal manner, and, by declaring their sentiments with *a strong voice*, to awaken ministers to a sense of the true interests of the country. Here was an acknowledgment, that their arguments were not addressed to the representatives of the people in Parliament; but to the populace out of it. Thus, while the efforts of the Government, seconded by all the loyal and well-disposed part of the community, were directed to the suppression of those seditious assemblages, which were now openly held in various parts of the kingdom for the dissemination of the most mischievous principles, and which were hostile alike to public peace and to social order, these factious leaders of a party did not blush to hold out a public invitation to the disaffected to continue their meetings; the qualification of holding them in a *legal* manner being a mere veil to cover the grossness of the proceeding; for, in the present temper of the public mind, imbecility alone could believe that the persons who would assemble on such an occasion, and on such an invitation, would subject their meetings, or their discussions, to the salutary restraints of those laws which they openly reviled, or to the decorous regulations of a legislative body, even the legality of which they peremptorily denied.

Mr. Sheridan was most unsparing in his abuse of administration, whom he charged with being the authors of a system of alarm, calcu-

lated to deceive and to ensnare the people, while he maintained, that the traitorous designs, which had been indicated in the reports of the Secret Committee, were *fabulous plots*, and *forged conspiracies*, originating solely in the foul imaginations of his Majesty's ministers. This baseless assertion was immediately repelled by Mr. Pitt, as destitute alike of probability and of decency. He justly regarded Mr. Sheridan's abuse as being too often repeated to possess the merit of novelty, and as too unfounded to have any importance attached to it. But there was some degree of novelty, indeed, in such a mode of attack on the report of twenty-one members, to whose character, for honour and integrity, he would not do any injury by comparing it with the quarter whence it proceeded. A call to order by a member of the party, and supported by the Speaker, who had suffered Mr. Sheridan's scurrility to pass without notice, induced Mr. Pitt to apologize to the Chair, and to the House, to which *alone* he declared an apology to be due; while he properly reminded the Speaker, that the language which he had been called upon to answer was not within the rules either of parliamentary debate, or of parliamentary decency.

Mr. Pitt then justified the Committee against the senseless attack which had been made upon its integrity, stated the solid grounds on which its report had been founded, and exculpated the Government from the various charges which had been preferred against it. In this defence there was, of necessity, much of repetition, it being equally impossible and superfluous always to urge new reasons against old accusations. Mr. Fox having inferred, from the existence of different forms of government, at the same time, in every period of history, without producing wars, that the Jacobin government of France could not be incompatible with the security of other states, Mr. Pitt admitted the premises but denied the conclusion. He allowed the opposite forms of government might co-exist without interfering with each other, when they acted upon certain rules, and from certain principles; but the case was different with respect to such a system as that which now prevailed in France;—a system such as had never existed before in any country, and to which no analogy could be found in the history of mankind;—a system which he described as admitting of no modification of its

vices, excluding all principles, and bearing in itself the seeds of hostility to every regular government;—a system not possessing the means of power for the protection of its subjects, but usurping them for their oppression.—Such a system presented no remedy for its vices, or hope of security to its neighbours, but in its entire subversion. Mr. Pitt resisted the proposal for entering into a negotiation with France, at this juncture, on the ground, that the mere attempt would produce an instantaneous dissolution of the confederacy, while there was not the smallest prospect of concluding a peace, upon terms that would be either honourable or safe. He successfully ridiculed the preposterous notion of prescribing the form of government to be established in France on the destruction of the existing form, as being founded on the very principle of interference, which the persons who advanced it had so strongly reprobated; and as carrying that principle to a much greater extent than ministers and their supporters had ever pretended to carry it to. The House divided on the previous question, which was carried by two-hundred-and-eight votes against fifty-seven. The division in the House of Lords, where the Duke of Bedford had condescended to produce Mr. Fox's resolutions, was, on the motion for adjournment, one-hundred against thirteen.

It was this obstinate perseverance in principles, and in conduct, so repugnant to the general sense of the country, and so hostile to its welfare, that, probably, fixed the determination of the leaders of the Whig Party, who had long supported the ministers, to take upon them a proper share of the responsibility which attached to their measures. In pursuance of this honourable resolution, the Duke of Portland accepted the situation of Secretary of State for the Home Department;—Earl Fitzwilliam was appointed President of the council;—Earl Spencer, Lord Privy Seal;—and Mr. Windham, Secretary at War, with a seat in the Cabinet, which did not attach to the office, but which was assigned, as an honourable mark of confidence and distinction. Other members of the same party were likewise admitted into the administration. The motives which influenced the conduct of these distinguished persons, on the present occasion, were indeed most eminently laudable. They acted from a high sense of public duty; from a deep-

rooted principle of genuine patriotism, which abhors interest as a rule of action, and renders all private attachments, and personal friendship, subservient to the general good,—to the welfare, the prosperity and the happiness of the state.—It was the sacrifice of patriotism on the altar of the country.

Such an accession of strength to the minister could not be received without evident marks of disappointment and disgust, by the small remnant of that body which had deserted its leaders, and which might, more properly, be termed *a faction* than *a party*. As Parliament was not yet prorogued, they determined to make that the channel for the conveyance of their sentiments, and their feelings, on the subject, to the public. With his usual ingenuity, Mr. Sheridan contrived to introduce them into the discussion of a motion which he submitted to the House on the 10th of July, respecting the Prussian subsidy. He then expatiated on the imputed inconsistency of those who had joined the ministry, particularly of the new Secretary at War, who, he imagined, was now reposing himself in the cool shade of the Chiltern Hundreds. He professed to lament what he called the dereliction of principle (but what was, in fact, a firm adherence to principle) in that gentleman and the Duke of Portland, both of whom, he said, had pledged themselves never to act with the present administration. They had, indeed, accepted a share of responsibility; and he ventured to predict, that it would be a perilous responsibility, that a solemn hour of account would, at length, arrive, which no accession of numbers could ward off, or protract; when the hearts of the nation would be turned to one man, whose glory no diminution of party could impair, but who appeared to stand on higher ground by being less surrounded.—To him, in the stormy hour, would the nation turn, and they would find him—

> "Like a great sea-mark, standing every flow,
> "And saving those that eye him."

The natural termination of this pompous panegyric, in which Mr. Sheridan proved himself a better orator than a prophet, was strictly appropriate:—laudari a *laudato* viro, is certainly an honourable dis-

tinction, but, if the converse of the proposition be equally true, Mr. Fox had not much reason to be gratified with the officious commendations of his political trumpeter.

In his desultory harangue, Mr. Sheridan had contrived once more to expatiate on the object of the war, the state of our alliances, and on the various questions, either connected with, or arising out of, those important subjects. On all these points, Mr. Pitt thought it necessary again to correct his mistatements, and to expose his fallacies. He chastised Mr. Sheridan, with becoming severity, for stigmatizing, as *despots*, all those powers, including Great Britain, who entered into a confederacy against the Jacobin government of France;—a mode of speech, which, like many of the tropes and figures used by the Opposition at this period, had been borrowed from the members and admirers of that government. Mr. Sheridan having asked, in the course of his general censures of ministers, what promise they had fulfilled?—Mr. Pitt called upon him to say, what promise they had broken? The only way in which it was possible for them to break their promise, was to follow his advice, and to relinquish the object of the war,—to abandon every engagement with their allies,—to forget every debt which they owed to society,—every trust reposed in them by their Sovereign and by Parliament,—and every thing which they owed to honour, honesty, or their own reputation.

It had been made one part of the charge against ministers, that they were unpopular in America. But Mr. Sheridan, while he preferred this strange accusation, had observed, that there was a Jacobin party in that country, acting on French principles, and promoting French interests. Mr. Pitt expressed his hopes, then, that the King's Ministers were as unpopular with that party, as Mr. Sheridan himself was with those who opposed Jacobin principles in this country. He could not have believed, if he had not heard the fact from his own lips, that the persons who professed those principles in America, were part of Mr. Sheridan's correspondents; but he was not very nice in his choice of correspondents in the Western hemisphere. It was of little consequence, however, whether the British Ministers were popular or

unpopular in America;—he, for one, always expected to be unpopular with Jacobins, at home and abroad. It was enough for him to know, that the popularity of administration in this country would depend on the success of their efforts to check the progress of Jacobin principles, and on their firmness in opposing them, wherever they occurred, and in whatever shape they might be found. To promote impressions unfavourable to the success of the war, and to retrieve, if possible, a small degree of that popularity which had been lost by Mr. Sheridan's Jacobin friends in America, was pretty clearly the great object of his present motion.

Having animadverted, with equal spirit, on Mr. Sheridan's strictures on all the measures of government, Mr. Pitt observed, in conclusion, that none of those measures, nor yet the object of the war, had produced so much irritation in his mind, as one matter of domestic concern to which he had so pointedly alluded. He had asked, what there could be, but a great and pressing necessity, to produce the new arrangements in the present administration?—This question Mr. Pitt answered with another,—What greater necessity could there exist to faithful subjects of their Sovereign, to honest guardians of the constitution, and to sincere lovers of their country, to unite their efforts to preserve the security of the Crown,—the authority of the Parliament,—the liberty, the tranquillity, and the safety of the nation, than the necessity of the present moment?—What description of persons were more likely to serve the King well, or to defend the constitution wisely and faithfully, than those who had united on the ground of that necessity? What was their object? They were not contending whether one family or another should compose the administration; they were not contending, on constitutional points, whether this or that legislative measure, whether this or that mode of representation should be adopted;—they were not then debating what was the best form of government for India, nor discussing the merits of a peace made twelve years ago. Having stated what was *not* the object of the new administration, and what they had *not* done, Mr. Pitt proceeded to state what *was* their object, and what they *were* doing.—They were considering, during the existence of an alarming, disastrous, and unprovoked war, what was the best

mode of defending the liberty, the property, and the security of every Englishman, by preserving the constitution from the dangers and destruction with which it was threatened.—And, as they tendered their allegiance, as they tendered their safety, as they cherished the memory of their ancestors, who had defended that constitution, as they regarded the interests of their posterity, they were bound to lay aside every distinction, to remove every obstacle, and to unite the talents, the characters, the integrity, and the honour, of all honest men who were able to serve their country;—upon which union depended, most essentially, the present and future safety, not only of Great Britain, but of Europe. On these principles had they united;—on these principles would they act; and, if their exertions should unfortunately fail to secure the desired success, they would, at least, have the consolation of being conscious that every effort had been made which human wisdom could suggest; and that nothing had been wanting, on their parts, towards the attainment of an object, to which there was not one among them who would not devote all his faculties, and, if necessary, his life.—These, Mr. Pitt solemnly declared to be his feelings and sentiments on the subject.

After this explicit avowal of the grounds of the new union of political characters, an union founded on the best and purest principles which can actuate the mind of a patriot, the House negatived Mr. Sheridan's motion without a division; and, on the 10th of July, a period was put to the sessions by a speech from the throne.

It is not possible to pay a close attention to the speeches of Opposition, during this session, without perceiving their uniform and direct tendency to encourage the French government to persevere in their destructive system of foreign and domestic policy;—and, at the same time, to animate the mind, and to invigorate the efforts, of sedition, at home. With the solitary exception of the murder of the King, there was scarcely an act of the Executive Council of France which was not either openly defended, or indirectly palliated, in the British Senate. French vigour, and French courage, afforded frequent topics of applause and admiration to English Representatives,—while the efforts

of our own troops (unless, indeed, conducted by leaders immediately connected with the party) extorted no mark of approbation, and while the disasters of our allies were dwelt on with evident pleasure; those allies, too, were vilified by the party, who lavished on them the most opprobrious terms which the language could supply; they were reprobated as plunderers by those who could descry nothing to condemn in the conduct of a government which subsisted only by plunder;—they were reviled as despots by those who could see nothing but integrity, wisdom, and happiness, in the most atrocious and sanguinary despotism which had ever disgraced the earth.—Their cause, which was the cause of Britain, was represented to be as hopeless and desperate as it was base and unprincipled; while the cause of France was boldly proclaimed to be prosperous and triumphant, as it was virtuous and just. The resources of this country, too, were declared to be weak, fallacious, and temporary, while the resources of France were pronounced inexhaustible. Language better calculated to raise the spirits of our enemies, and to depress our own, the human imagination can scarcely conceive; yet such was the substance of the speeches of Mr. Fox and his friends, on the subject of the war, in reference to these various points.

In regard to our domestic enemies, their declarations were calculated to produce a similar effect: not a measure was proposed, to check the torrent of disaffection, and to crush the growing evil, ere it arrived at destructive maturity, that did not experience the most determined resistance; not a plan was unfolded, however pregnant with mischief to the country, which was not deemed a fit subject for levity and ridicule; not an accusation was preferred, however serious and weighty, which was not treated with derision; not a conspiracy was developed, however supported by authentic documents, and unequivocal proofs, the very existence of which was not denied; and no agent of sedition was convicted who did not excite a lively interest, and a deep compassion,—and who did not experience protection and encouragement.*

* Some members of the Opposition, at this period, paid a visit to the Scottish convicts, under sentence of transportation. These gentlemen, probably, recollected, that the Roman

But the most consummate assurance was requisite to term the plots which were unfolded by the secret committees of both Houses, and which were supported by such a body of evidence as was adduced in their reports, *forged plots* and *fabricated conspiracies!* No effort, however, appeared too great, no meanness too little, which could forward the great object in view—the embarrassment of Ministers, and the success of their enemies, of whatever description. The leader of that small band of political declaimers, which now formed the Opposition in Parliament, suffering under the pangs of disappointed ambition, all his hopes defeated, all his projects frustrated, sunk, degraded, and mortified, appears to have listened to the suggestions of despair, and, foregoing all expectation of succeeding to power but through the medium of the populace, to have resolved to recur to that desperate expedient; and, rather to gratify his wishes at the risk of a Revolution, than remain quiet and passive, without consequence or distinction. At least, on no other supposition can his conduct, at this period, be accounted for. He possessed too much knowledge and abilities not to appreciate the dangers which threatened the country;* and not to perceive the full scope and intent of those exertions which the disaffected were making in different parts of the kingdom; nay more, he possessed so much influence over the members of the societies, that a single word of disapprobation from him would have sufficed to deprive them of courage, and to put a stop to all their proceedings.† That word, however, was never pronounced; on the contrary, all his sentiments, respecting them, were conveyed, not in the accents of reproof, but in the language of palliation, defence, and encouragement.

demagogue, Clodius, succeeded in persuading the people, that the *patriots*, who had suffered for conspiring with *Cataline* against the state, had been *unjustly treated!*

* In the various resolutions which Mr. Fox proposed to the House, with a view to express his disapprobation of the war, and to deprecate its continuance, he acted in strict unison with the recorded sentiments of the seditious clubs, who justly considered the war with France as a considerable impediment to the attainment of their objects. See Appendix C. to the printed reports of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons.

† I have heard this fact asserted by one of the most active, and most able, leaders of the conspiracy, who avowed the determination of the societies, should their means prove adequate to the accomplishment of their object, to produce a complete Revolution in this country on French principles.

Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, had, during this critical period, displayed great firmness and consistency of conduct. Solely intent on preserving the vessel of the State, which was entrusted to his care, from the rocks and shoals with which she was surrounded, he pursued his even and steady course, unseduced by the wiles of party, and unintimidated by the blasts of faction. Exclusively occupied with the welfare of his country, his mind had no space left for envy or jealousy to fill.—Regardless of power, but as the means to promote this great end, he was willing to share it with all who would join him in the noble attempt to attain it.—Such sentiments were as well calculated to extinguish all feelings of political hostility, as such conduct was to inspire esteem and confidence.—And hence arose that union with the distinguished leaders of the Whig party, which rendered his administration, in point of weight, character, ability, and influence, one of the strongest and most powerful which had ever been formed, and peculiarly adapted to the pressing exigency of the times.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Affairs of France—Revolutionary means for creating an army—Relative force of the belligerent powers—Advantage of the French over their enemies—Difference between the British and Austrian Commanders—Their respective pretensions—General Pichegru takes the command of the French army—Adopts the plan of general Lloyd—The Emperor of Germany places himself at the head of the allied army—Defeat of the French near Landreçy—Siege and capture of Landreçy—Gallant action of some British and Austrian Light Dragoons, at Villars-en-Cauchie—The French make an irruption into Maritime Flanders—Masterly conduct of General Clerfayt—General attack on the French positions—The allies repulsed—The French attack the allies, and are defeated with great loss—Expulsion of the allies from the Netherlands—Murderous decree of the French Convention—Cowardly conduct of the Commanders of Valenciennes, Condè, and Landreçy, which are surrendered to the French, together with Quesnoy—the Austrians are driven beyond the Rhine—Crevecœur and Bois-le-duc surrendered to the French by the cowardice of their commanders; and the French Emigrants basely given up to the conquerors—The strong fortress of Nimeguen evacuated by orders of the Duke of York—The French army of the Moselle defeat the allies, and force them to repass the Rhine—The British fleet, under the command of Lord Howe, falls in with the French fleet, under Villaret-Joyeuse—Battle of the first of June—French defeated, with the loss of eight ships of the line—Success of the British arms in the West Indies—Martinique and Guadaloupe taken—Saint Lucie, and other French islands, reduced—Guadaloupe re-taken—Internal state of France—State of parties—Despotism of Robespierre—Committee of Public Safety—System of terror—Numerous executions—Persecution of women—Fourteen young ladies executed together, for having danced at a ball with the Prussian officers—Twenty females of Poitou guillotined—Ferocious remark of Billaud-Varennes—Dreadful state of the prisoners—Cruelty to pregnant women—Barbarous observation of Couthon—Trial and murder of the Princess Elizabeth—Execution of Count D'Estaing, of Thourét, and D'Espremenil—Memorable observation of D'Espremenil to Thourét—Anecdote of Thourét—Admirable reproof of Isabeau D'Youval, to the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal—New schism among the Jacobins—The Cordeliers—They attack the *Men of Blood*—Chabot, Thomas Payne, Anarcharsis Clootz, and others, arrested—Execution of Hebert and Chaumette—Anarcharsis Clootz guillotined—Dies an atheist—Execution of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, and others, of the Cordeliers—New decree for extending the system of persecution—Decree for acknowledging the existence of a God, and the immortality of the soul—Cecile Regnault—Her execution, with sixty other persons, for a pretended conspiracy against the life of Robespierre—Barrere accuses Mr. Pitt of having planned this conspiracy—Fulsome adulation of Robespierre—Sanguinary decree proposed by Couthon—Servilely adopted by the Convention—Subsequent Debates—

Divisions in the Committee of Public Welfare—Meditated destruction of Robespierre—Project of either party for murdering their opponents—Weak and indecisive conduct of Robespierre—The other Jacobins court a junction with the Brissotins—Tallien attacks Robespierre in the Convention—Billaud-Varennes supports Tallien—Indecent conduct of the Convention—Refuse to hear Robespierre speak—Tallien threatens to murder him—Rage of Robespierre—Decree of Accusation against the two Robespierres, Couthon, St. Just, and Lebas—The Gaoler refuses to receive them, and the Guards suffer them to escape—The Jacobins rise in their defence—Their cowardice and indecision—Active measures of the Convention—Robespierre and his associates seized, and executed without trial—State of Parties after the death of Robespierre—Proceedings of the Convention—Execution of Fouquier-Tinville, Lebon, and Carrier—Law for suppressing all *Affiliated* and *Corresponding* Societies—The Jacobin Club attacked and closed—Complaint of the Jacobins in the Convention—Character of the Jacobins by Rewbell—Rapid progress of sedition in Great Britain—New Convention projected—The disaffected are trained to the use of arms—Plan of an insurrection in Edinburgh—Trial and execution of Watt and Downie for high treason—Trials and acquittal of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall—Evidence of Mr. Pitt—Existence of a Treasonable Conspiracy proved—Acquittal of the State Prisoners, a proof of the excellence of the British Laws.

[1794.] The system of terror which was completely established in France gave to the rulers of that land an absolute dominion over the persons of its inhabitants, and over every thing which it contained.—Resolved to extend their sway over the neighbouring countries, to enlarge their own boundaries, and to obtain, by plunder, the means of supporting those gigantic efforts which they were thus enabled to make, they had armed, at the close of the year 1793, nearly one million of men, three hundred thousand of whom were employed on the Northern frontier of the Republic. To these the allies had not more than one hundred and forty thousand men to oppose. Besides the superiority of numbers, the French army had the advantage of being subject to the orders of one chief, as it were; while the allies, composed of different nations, were commanded by various leaders, who were very far from acting with that cordial spirit of co-operation which was so essentially necessary, not merely to ensure success, but to prevent defeat.—At the very opening of the campaign, a difference arose between the British and the Austrian commanders; the Duke of York refusing to act in a subordinate station to the veteran General Clerfayt;—the pretensions of the former were supported by superiority of rank; and those of the latter by superiority of military talents, skill, knowledge,

and experience. The difficulty was at length removed by the resolution of the Emperor of Germany to take the field in person.

To enter into a minute detail of military operations is foreign from the purpose of this work; it is intended merely to state the general result. The command of the French army was given to General Pichegru, an officer of great merit, and of equal modesty, a quality rarely to be found in a French republican.—He wisely resolved, in conformity with a plan long before published by General Lloyd, in his political and military memoirs, to endeavour to turn the right and left flanks of the allies, and to keep the centre, which consisted of eighty-five thousand men, and was stationed between the Sambre and the Meuse, at bay.

The Emperor took the command of the allied army, on the heights of Cateau, in the middle of April.—The first operation determined on was the siege of Landreçy; but, before it could be accomplished, it was necessary to drive the French from their cantonments in the neighbourhood. This was done by a general attack on the 17th of April, in which the French suffered pretty severely. The Prince of Orange then laid siege to Landreçy, which surrendered in a few days. On the 24th of April a very gallant action was performed, by two squadrons of Austrian Hussars, under Colonel Sentkeresky, and two of the fifteenth British light dragoons, under Major Aylett, amounting only to two hundred and seventy-two men in the whole. They had been sent on a reconnoitring party, and had found the enemy, ten thousand strong, posted at Villars-en-Cauchie. General Clerfayt, who had accompanied the party, directed these squadrons to attack the French. They accordingly made a furious charge on the Republican cavalry, which they immediately broke, and drove them behind their infantry. They then charged the infantry, which they completely routed, and pursued them to the very walls of Bouchain. In this brilliant affair, the French lost twelve hundred men, in killed and wounded, and three pieces of artillery. The Emperor ordered medals to be struck on this occasion, and given to the British officers who

had so nobly distinguished themselves. Two days after, the French made a general attack on the whole line of the allies, but were defeated in every part, with great slaughter.

Pichegru, meantime, intent on his grand plan, sent fifty thousand men, under Generals Souham and Moreau, to force the positions of the allies on the right flank, and to overrun maritime Flanders. Here a variety of actions were fought, with varied success. In defending himself against a superior force, General Clerfayt displayed the greatest talents and courage; and the British troops distinguished themselves on various occasions. On the 17th of May the Emperor directed a general attack on the enemy, in order to drive them out of Flanders; but the attempt proved fruitless: on that, and on the following day, the allies, and particularly the British, suffered most severely. Pichegru, resolved to improve the advantage which he had gained, and to profit by the confusion and dismay which he flattered himself he had occasioned, advanced, on the twenty-second of May, with an army of one hundred thousand men, with a view to cross the Scheldt, and to take Tournay. The attack began at five in the morning, and continued till nine at night. The French were ultimately defeated, with the loss of at least a tenth part of their force; while that of the allies amounted to three thousand men. But this vast effusion of blood produced nothing decisive. The French generals were perfectly regardless of the lives of their men, and careless how many were sacrificed, so that they attained their object. As fast as their ranks were thinned by the sword, they were filled up with fresh troops; while the losses of the allies were slowly, and with difficulty, repaired. The consequence of this disparity was such as might be expected. After various engagements, the allies were compelled to yield to the superior force of the enemy; and, early in July, the French were left in possession, not only of maritime Flanders, but of the whole of the Austrian Netherlands, which were again destined to experience all the miseries which the most ferocious banditti, that ever disgraced the human name and character, could inflict.

It now only remained for the Republicans to recover the fortresses of

Valenciennes, Condè, Landreçy, and Quesnoy. In order to forward this important object, the Convention passed a decree, on the fourth of July, by which it was ordered, that if the garrisons of these places should refuse to surrender at discretion, within four-and-twenty hours after they had been summoned, they should be all put to the sword. These unmanly threats, worthy of the sanguinary wretches by whom they were devised, had no effect on the brave commander of Quesnoy, who sustained a siege of one-and-twenty days before he consented to surrender the place. Landreçy, provided only with a feeble garrison, was incapable of defence, and therefore opened its gates to the French. But Valenciennes, having been put in a complete state of defence, was capable of sustaining a siege of eight months, yet did the commander basely surrender this important fortress, on the 27th of August, without a struggle; delivering up more than eleven hundred loyal Frenchmen to the rage of their merciless enemies. Condè, too, though equally capable of resistance, followed the example three days after.

The French generals now advanced in security.—Jourdan, at the head of the army of the Sambre and Meuse, pursued the Austrians into the Principality of Liege, and, after various engagements, succeeded in obtaining possession of the Duchy of Juliers, and the Electorate of Cologne, and in forcing General Clerfayt to repass the Rhine. The fortresses of Stephensward, Venlo, and Maestricht, were reduced by other divisions of the same army.

Pichegru, with the army of the north, followed the British in their retreat towards Holland. By the cowardice and treachery of Colonel Thiboelt and the Prince of Hesse Philipstadt, he obtained possession of the important fortresses of Crevecœur and Bois-le-duc. At the last of these places, four hundred and eight French emigrants were given up to the sword, by the dastardly commander. At the beginning of November, the French began the siege of Nimeguen, without, however, the smallest prospect of success. But the Duke of York, to the surprise of every one, ordered the place to be evacuated on the night of the seventh, and the French took immediate possession of it.

On the side of the Moselle, where the French were commanded by Hoche, they were equally successful. The Duke of Brunswick, at the head of the Prussians, and General Wurmser, at the head of the Austrian army, made a long and obstinate stand against the Republicans, and great numbers were slain on both sides; but, at the close of the campaign, the allies were forced to cross the Rhine, leaving all the provinces on the left bank of that river in possession of the enemy.

Thus successful, in all quarters, by land, the French Convention deemed their power equally irresistible by sea. As they expected a valuable convoy from America, they ordered Admiral Villaret Joyeuse, who commanded the Brest fleet, to put to sea for its protection.—With this fleet the British, commanded by Lord Howe, fell in, on the 28th of May; a partial engagement took place on that and the following day; but on the first of June the British commander, having gained the weather-gage, was enabled to bring the French to a general action. For about an hour the French fought with great resolution, but their admiral then sheered off, and all the ships that were able hastened to follow him; while the British fleet were so crippled as to be unable to pursue them. Two ships of eighty, and five of seventy-four guns, however, struck, and were taken possession of, except one, the Northumberland, which sunk before the whole of her crew could be taken out. Another French ship of the line sunk during the action. But, notwithstanding this victory, the American convoy, about which the French expressed so much anxiety, entered Brest harbour in safety, twelve days after.

The British arms were successful in expelling the French from the island of Corsica, which was formally united to the Crown of Great Britain, by the unanimous desire of the inhabitants. In the West Indies, General Sir Charles Grey, and Admiral Sir John Jervis, succeeded in reducing the islands of Martinique, Guadaloupe, Saint Lucie, the Saints, Desirada, and Marigalante. But the ravages of disease so thinned the British force, in the course of the summer, that

Guadaloupe was retaken by the enemy. The power of Great Britain thus proved as triumphant at sea as that of France did by land.

While, however, the arms of the Republic shed a dazzling, though delusive, glory around her, her internal state was such as to render, to her inhabitants, the scorching sands of the Arabian deserts an enviable residence, and a comparative paradise. At the close of 1793, the Brissotins being totally crushed, Robespierre reigned Lord Paramount of France, exposed to no opposition, and subject to no control. At the head of the Committee of Public Safety, which might be considered as his privy council, he had for his associates four men of congenial souls,—Billaud Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, (the father of the Republic) Saint Just, and Couthon. Carnot was admitted as a member on account of his military knowledge, in which, of course, these upstarts were wholly deficient. From this committee, which was literally a committee of destruction, issued those mandates of death which filled all the numerous prisons of the capital; for the detestable Parisians, to whose rebellious spirit the demolition of the fortress of the Bastille was owing, were now destined to experience a most appropriate reward, by seeing a new Bastille erected in every street. To explain the frivolous pretexts on which these partakers of *liberty and equality*, these freemen of France, whose fate was deemed so enviable by the reforming citizens of Great Britain, were not only imprisoned, but executed; to describe the wanton acts of cruelty exercised upon them during their confinement, when every kind of barbarity was aggravated by every species of mockery; and to detail the flagrant iniquity of the judges and juries, though a task which, for the benefit of future times, should be performed, would require a volume of no moderate size. Though not less than forty persons, of all ages, and of both sexes, were daily consigned to the guillotine, the prisons, replenished as soon as thinned, were almost constantly full. The rage of these monsters in human shape seems to have been more particularly directed against women;—to deprave their morals, to persecute their persons, and to forward their destruction, appeared to be equally the objects of their study. Fourteen young ladies, from Verdun, who

are described, by a person who was imprisoned with them, as being of unexampled modesty, and having the appearance of virgins dressed for a bridal feast, were led together to the scaffold, on a charge of having danced at a ball given by some Prussian officers, in 1792, while the place was in possession of the allies. Twenty females, from Poitou, mostly peasants, were also executed together. While they were laying in the yard of the prison, one of them had an infant at her breast, which was forcibly torn from her, as they were going to conduct her to the place of execution.—Several of these unhappy females died on the way, but the savages guillotined their bodies. Many women, in a state of pregnancy, died in the different prisons for want of that assistance which their situation required.—And when Billaud Varennes was apprized of the fact, instead of giving such orders as would prevent a recurrence of the evil, he remarked, with true philosophical apathy, "'Tis so much trouble saved to the executioner."

So dreadful was the state of the prisoners, that many of them actually petitioned to be executed. To a woman, who applied for this purpose to him, Couthon said,—"You have not been long enough in a situation which makes death desirable." A lady, in the last stage of pregnancy, was seized with the pains of labour at the moment when she was summoned to repair to the guillotine. Regardless of her situation, she was compelled to descend to the yard, where two soldiers dragged her towards the cart, till her agonies rose to such a height that they were at length compelled to put her into the first room they could find, where she was immediately delivered, alone, and without assistance.

Among the crowds who were thus hurried to the scaffold, with indiscriminate barbarity, was the Princess Elizabeth, the virtuous sister of Louis XVI. a lady of spotless purity of mind and character, whose whole life was a mingled scene of humble piety and active benevolence. She was charged with having conspired to restore royalty, with persons, many of whom she had never even seen;—not a witness was produced, nor a single attempt made, to substantiate any one fact alleged against her.—She was condemned to death with twenty-four of her reputed

accomplices; and she died as she had lived, devout, tranquil, and resigned; considering the sentence which consigned her to the scaffold as a welcome passport to a better life.

The Count d'Estaing, who had disgraced his rank by his conduct, fell, at this time, an unlamented victim to the Revolution which he had so warmly cherished;—and the Duc de Biron paid the forfeit of his life for his attachment to the Duke of Orleans.—While under confinement, however, this nobleman had time for reflection;—he openly deplored the crimes which he had committed against his Sovereign, and justly ascribed his fate to the prevalence of those principles which he had so industriously laboured to disseminate. Thourét and D'Epresmenil were conducted to the scaffold together. The former had led the Norman bar, at the Parliament of Rouen; he had early adopted Revolutionary principles, and when he was appointed a member of the States-General, he declared, before he went to Versailles, his conviction of the necessity of destroying both priests and nobles.* D'Epresmenil was a distinguished member of the Parliament of Paris, and had then acquired great popularity by his strenuous opposition to the government, though his attachment to the monarchy was afterwards imputed to him as an unpardonable crime.—Struck with the similarity of their fate, though their conduct had been so dissimilar, D'Epresmenil said to his fellow-prisoner—"This day, Mr. Thourét, gives us a dreadful "problem to solve;—against which of us two will the clamours of "the mob be directed?" "Against both, believe me," answered Thourét.

When Isabeau D'Youval, who had formerly held the office of chief clerk to the Parliament of Paris, was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, which now sat at the Palais, where the Parliament formerly held their sittings, the president said to him with a malignant sneer, "You must recollect this hall?" "Yes," answered he, "this is the "place where innocence formerly sat in judgment on crime; but

* This fact was related to me by a gentleman who was a member of the Parliament of Rouen, and who received it from Thourét himself, in a conversation which he had with him before he left Rouen for Versailles.

" where criminals now condemn the innocent!" Such incidents are pregnant with instructive lessons.

The wanton cruelties now exercised, however, were viewed, even by some of the most sanguinary revolutionists, with disapprobation; not that these men had any humane scruples which made them object to the effusion of blood, when any purpose was to be answered by shedding it, but they did not like to see it shed uselessly and unprofitably; besides, it is highly probable, they began to fear for themselves. Happily for the cause of humanity, one schism was no sooner healed than another broke out among the Jacobins.—After the extinction of the Brissotin party, the Cordeliers, another branch of the Jacobins, sprang up; at the head of these were Danton, Fabre D'Eglantine, Camille Desmoulins, Hebert, and Chaumette; and, could they have agreed among themselves, they would have formed a very powerful opposition to Robespierre and his associates;—for they had none of that timidity and irresolution which marked the feeble conduct of the Brissotins.—But the three first of these Revolutionary heroes, and in particular Danton, who had acquired wealth by the Revolution which he wished to enjoy in peace, could ill brook the beastly manners, and brutal conduct, of the other two, whose constant declamations against riches, which they represented as infallible proofs of an aristocratic spirit, were by no means pleasing to their associates.

Danton, though he knew that four of the five leading members of the Committee of Public Safety were his enemies, thought he could rely on the friendship of Robespierre, who professed the strongest attachment to him.—To Robespierre, then, he opened his mind, respecting the threatened rupture between the Jacobins and the Cordeliers; and this sanguinary wretch, who had openly justified all the massacres of September, 1792, now affected to stand forth the advocate of humanity.—He represented, indeed, not the *inhumanity*, but the *inutility*, of such constant executions, and Robespierre affected to coincide with him in opinion, but declared his inability to control the furious Jacobins with whom he was associated; he even carried his hypocrisy so

far as to connive at the arrest of Chabot, Thuriot, Bazire, Delauny, D'Angers, Paine, and Clootz, and even encouraged Camille Desmoulins to attack the *men of blood*, as they were emphatically and appropriately called, in his writings. The public were thus indebted to Robespierre for the discovery of many atrocious acts, which tend to elucidate this period of the Revolutionary history; for Camille Desmoulins now directed his attacks, in a paper called *Le Vieux Cordelier*, against the Jacobins of the Committee of Public Safety, and those of the Commune of Paris; with the materials of which he was supplied by Philippeaux, who detailed all the massacres which they had ordered, and even charged them with sending troops on purpose to be defeated, that the troubles in La Vendée might be prolonged.

Soon after this, Hebert, Chaumette, and several others, were arrested, thrown into prison, and executed, to the great joy of the volatile Parisians, who hailed, as their idol, one day, the very men whose death they applauded the next. Anacharsis Clootz, *the orator of the human race*, was guillotined at the same time. This man, while in prison, uttered the most horrible blasphemies, styled himself *the personal enemy of Jesus Christ!* and really died, as he had lived, a confirmed Atheist. The exultation of the people, on the execution of Hebert and his associates, filled Robespierre with alarm, but he had proceeded too far to retract. Danton, meanwhile, by dividing the Cordeliers, had paved the way for his own ruin.—He had been completely duped by Robespierre, and, on the 30th of March, he, with his friends, Lacroix, Camille Desmoulins, and Philippeaux, were arrested; in a few days they were tried, with several others, condemned, and executed;—Danton predicting, in his last moments, that Robespierre would speedily follow him.

The time at which the prediction of this expiring Jacobin was to be fulfilled was not far distant. Robespierre, feeling the plenitude of his power, now resolved to exert it to the utmost. He immediately disclosed his intention of extending the system of persecution, and, comprehensive as it already was, the wonderful ingenuity of his diabolical mind contrived means for bringing within its grasp a still greater num-

ber of objects than it had hitherto embraced, and for enlarging the mass of victims to be sacrificed on the altar of Jacobinism. A new decree was passed by the servile Convention, in which the forbearance to denounce uncivic language, or the utterance of complaints against the Revolution, with other acts of omission and commission, equally harmless, were declared to be crimes, and liable to various degrees of punishment, from imprisonment to transportation and death.

But Robespierre, although he acted as if he believed there was no God, had ever professed his disgust at the conduct of the atheistical zealots; and had declared, in the Jacobin Club, that those who wished to suppress the celebration of mass were greater fanatics than those by whom it was performed; and that, under pretext of destroying religion, a faction was labouring to make a religion of Atheism itself. This was perfectly true; but the conduct of Robespierre had been uniformly such as to render it impossible to believe that, in making this declaration, and in acting as he now acted, he was influenced, in the smallest degree, by a regard for religion. It is most probable that, finding every effort to eradicate all religious and moral principles from the human mind either abortive or only partially successful;—that observing, where the attempt succeeded, it produced a set of wretches equally desperate and untractable, without any bond of attachment or motive of obedience;—and that the purpose for which this horrible system had been originally adopted had been fully answered by the destruction of all those virtuous priests who were considered as *refractory*, and by the complete confiscation of all the property of the church, he conceived that, by giving a legal sanction to religious worship, he might mitigate the enmity of numbers, and more effectually crush the remnant of a faction who had dared to dispute with him the possession of supreme power. Whatever was his motive, he made a long report to the Convention, on the 7th of May, in which he ascribed, and not without reason, many of the plots against the government to the prevalence of atheistical principles; (to which he might, with at least equal truth, have imputed the conduct of the government itself;) and he concluded with moving a

decree, the only laudable object of which was, the sanction of the freedom of religious worship.

This decree was adopted, of *course*, by the Convention, who would, with the same abject acquiescence, have given their sanction to it if its object had been to consecrate the worship of Satan. But the presumption which stamped the very face of it, rendered it nearly as disgusting to every sober Christian, as the public profession of Atheism, by the Convention, on a former occasion. It began by *an acknowledgment* of the existence of a Supreme Being, and of the immortality of the soul, (as if these were adventitious circumstances to which the characters of truth could not be attached without their *fiat*,) proclaimed in the same dry dictatorial style in which these philosophical legislators had been accustomed to pronounce their political apothegms on the liberty and equality of their citizens, and on the unity and indivisibility of their Republic. After such an acknowledgment, they could not dispense with the worship of the Deity; festivals, therefore, were instituted on every tenth day, or decade, to his honour; but, at the same time, there were associated with him, in this mark of distinction, murderers, rebels, and regicides; Marat, and other Revolutionary worthies, as well as the various passions and accidents to which human nature is subject, having similar honours conferred on them. This strange mixture of religious worship, and Pagan idolatry, sufficiently proves, that the delusion of the people was the principal aim of Robespierre in his extraordinary decree; which, from a vanity peculiar to the French, was ordered to be printed and translated into all languages. In commemoration of this event, his friend and coadjutor, David, painted a large picture, in which he impiously gave to the figure of the Creator the face of Robespierre!

At this time an incident occurred which served to raise Robespierre in the estimation of the execrable and credulous Parisians.—A young woman, named Aimée Cecile Regnault, whose father was a stationer at Paris, having a wish to see Robespierre, called at his lodging in the evening, and, on being told that he could not be seen, shrewdly

remarked, that a public functionary ought to be visible at all hours. This insult to the majesty of the Dictator was sufficient to ensure her immediate apprehension.—On her examination before the Conventional Committees, she observed, with more good sense than fell to any of their members, "That she would prefer one King to fifty thousand tyrants; and that she went to Robespierre's lodging merely to see how a tyrant looked." But she peremptorily disclaimed all intention of doing him any personal injury; nor, indeed does it appear that she was provided with any instrument for the purpose; and it was made evident that she had neither accomplice nor confident. This event, which, in any other town in the world than Paris, would have excited ridicule and contempt, was treated as a matter of importance, and as an infallible proof of a conspiracy against the invaluable life of Robespierre; who, accordingly, received numerous congratulations on his miraculous preservation; while Barrere, with his usual impudence, accused Mr. Pitt of contriving the plot; and Robespierre, affecting a courage which he did not feel, made an offer of his life at the shrine of his country. But the most iniquitous part of this disgraceful transaction remains to be noticed.—The unhapppy girl, and one l'Amiral, who, from a motive of private revenge, had attempted to shoot Collot D' Herbois, with sixty other persons, were, without trial, and without the examination of a single witness, declared guilty of a conspiracy against the Republic, and sentenced to die.

Nothing which the human imagination can conceive, in its most fantastic mood, or that Fancy could imagine, in her wildest reveries, however extravagant, and however monstrous, could exceed the fulsome adulation which now poured upon Robespierre, with unexampled profusion, from private individuals, and from public bodies, in every part of France.—His face, it has been seen, was given to the Almighty;—his name was assigned to a planet; on him was bestowed the appellation of the Messiah;—in short, every thing that was great, good, and virtuous, was represented, by these impious, profligate, and wretched people, as united in his person.—The documents containing the damning proofs of this horrible degradation of national character

have, fortunately for the historian, been preserved, or credulity itself would be tempted to withhold its belief from them.

But with all the power which he enjoyed, with all the engines of destruction which he possessed, Robespierre was not yet satisfied;—for, on the 10th of May, Couthon, his associate in the Committee of Public Safety, proposed a decree more atrocious, if possible, than any which had passed from the first dawn of the reign of terror to the present moment.—It not only professed to regulate the proceedings of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and to fix the number of its judges, but went to establish many new capital offences. Among the acts which were thus to be rendered capital, were—the vilifying the National Convention, or the Revolutionary Republican Government,—the deceiving the people, or their representatives, in order to induce them to take measures contrary to the interests of liberty,—the spreading false news,—endeavours to mislead the opinion, and hinder the instruction, or deprave the morals, of the people, to corrupt the public conscience and alter the energy and purity of the revolutionary and republican principles, or arrest their progress, whether by counter-revolutionary or insidious writings, or by any other machinations. To these, and many other acts, equally vague and undefined, was the punishment of death proposed to be affixed. And that no difficulties might be interposed to the conviction of any man whom the tyrant wished to destroy, all past rules of evidence were abrogated; and henceforth it was expressly declared, that, if there existed proofs, whether material or moral, independent of testimonial proof, no witnesses were to be called, unless it should be deemed necessary for the detection of accomplices, or reasons of great public importance. No witnesses were to be called either for the prosecution or for the prisoner, except by the public accuser; and, in order to abridge the proceedings, no counsel were to be allowed to the prisoners.

Great, however, as the authority of Robespierre was, and abject as the submission of the Convention had hitherto been, this monstrous decree was too terrific not to alarm even the Jacobins themselves.

These men, whom no principle of justice or humanity could stimulate to resistance, acknowledged the powerful impulse of personal fear, and shrunk from the sanction of a law which might be employed as an instrument for their own destruction.—And the recent sacrifice of Danton had convinced them, that Jacobinism itself afforded no protection against the hatred or the envy of Robespierre; while they plainly perceived, that no line of conduct, however determined on the one hand, or however circumspect on the other, could place them out of the reach of a law, which might, without much ingenuity, be made to apply to almost every act of a man's life. Still, though sensibly alive to the danger which threatened them, they did not dare to offer any direct opposition to the fatal decree, which, after a few weak observations, was adopted by the Convention.—It gave rise, however, to some subsequent discussions, which led to important consequences. In the sitting of the 12th of May, Charles Delacroix required an explanation of the new crime of depraving the public morals; and another member objected to the clause, which deprived prisoners of counsel. These objections certainly ought to have been made before the decree passed;—but they were not resisted on that ground; but their validity was contested on the ground of their merits.—Apprehensions, certainly not ill-grounded, having been expressed, the day before, by Bourdon de l'Oise, for the safety of the members of the Convention, who might be arrested under that decree, and sent to trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal, without that previous decree of accusation which the law required, Couthon now inveighed against him in terms of great asperity, and accused him of using the language of Pitt and Cobourg. Bourdon defended himself; but his defence only served to call forth the rage of Robespierre against him,—who abused both him and Tallien, for vilifying the Committee of Public Safety. One of those altercations ensued which so frequently disgraced the proceedings of these enlightened legislators. The most unvarnished language was used on both sides; the plainest contradictions were given and received;—and Billaud-Varennes closed the instructive scene by telling Tallien that he was an impudent liar, whose audacity exceeded belief.

But the support which, on this occasion, Robespierre received from

Billaud-Varennes, proceeded from a congeniality of disposition, and not from any cordiality of friendship.—They were equally terrorists, and equally fond of blood; but each aspired to political supremacy; and Billaud-Varennes knew Robespierre well enough to fear him. When men are wholly unrestrained by principle, the transition is short from the feelings of fear to the desire of revenge,—from a consciousness of the former to the resolution to remove it by the gratification of the latter. Among Robespierre's associates in the committee, too, was Collot D'Herbois, (originally a strolling player,) who had lately returned from a sanguinary mission in the South of France, and who was attached to that party of low, resolute, Sans-Culottes, whose leader, Hebert, Robespierre had lately consigned to the scaffold. This man was as anxious as Billaud-Varennes for the destruction of Robespierre, and took less pains to conceal his enmity, and to disguise his views.—It was to this division among the leaders of the Committee of Public Safety, that Tallien, and his friends, were indebted for the preservation of their lives, which must otherwise have been sacrificed to the rage of Robespierre.

Both parties were now intent on the execution of their respective plans.—Each was busy in preparing efficacious means for the destruction of the other.—Robespierre, on his part, intrigued with the Jacobin Clubs,—the Revolutionary Committees,—the Commune of Paris,—the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the National Guard; all of whom were firmly attached to him.—Confiding in their support, he suddenly ceased to attend the Committee of Public Safety, and formed a well-concerted scheme for the assassination of his enemies.—Those enemies, on their part, were more vigilant, and not less active. Their exertions, indeed, were adequate to the known power, influence, and sanguinary disposition, of their adversary. They applied to all who had cause for complaint against Robespierre,—and who had not?—imploring their assistance and co-operation in what they represented as a common cause, though the persons to whom they applied had almost equal cause for complaint against the applicants themselves. At this juncture, the small remnant of Brissot's friends, amounting to fifty or sixty members of the Convention, acquired a degree of consequence which

they had little expected. In a struggle between contending Jacobins, their influence might turn the scale, in favour of either party, which they chose to adopt;—earnest, therefore, were the intreaties of Danton's friends to obtain their assistance against Robespierre and his associates.

Had Robespierre possessed that presence of mind, and that determined resolution, which are essential requisites in the leader of any party, but which are indispensably necessary in the leader of such a party as that which he led, the superiority of his means was such that he must have triumphed over all his enemies, and the French Republic must have acknowledged him for her absolute master.—But both his courage and his ability failed him, in the hour of trial, and he manifested his incompetency to support the dreadful character which he had assumed. Instead of patiently waiting the decisive moment, when his plan was to be executed, by the general massacre of his foes at a projected banquet, he repaired (on the 26th of June) to the Convention, from which he had absented himself for some time, and made a long declamatory speech, having no fixed object, and calculated to answer no one purpose, but to increase the number of his enemies, and to aggravate their fears. His speech, however, was ordered to be printed; and the Jacobin Club, to which he read it immediately after he left the Convention, received it with enthusiastic applause. Had he seized this moment for the destruction of his opponents, nothing could have resisted him; but the night was suffered to pass away without any decisive act, and the opportunity so lost never returned.

On the 27th of July he entered the hall of the Convention for the last time. His friend, Saint Just, ascended the tribune, and repeated the sentiments which Robespierre had himself delivered on the preceding day. But Tallien, whose fears rendered him bold, and made him impatient for the approaching crisis, interrupted him in his speech by a furious invective against hypocrites and murderers. Then, turning to Robespierre, he said, "Will you, tyrant, pretend to conceal your "guilty designs against the National Representation? Did not I, "myself, yesterday, see all the preparations of your proscriptions? I

" was at the Jacobin Club, where I heard you devote us all to the dag-
" gers of your assassins, whom, at this very moment, Henriot is assem-
" bling. They are prepared to march, but we will prevent them. In
" this hall you cannot fix your eyes on a man who is not your enemy;—
" whom you have not forced to be so. The country, the whole
" human race, rise up against you, and we will enforce their demands
" for justice."

The speech of this man, whose own hands were steeped in innocent blood, was received by the Convention with the loudest applause,—which encouraged Billaud-Varennes, another sanguinary wretch, to throw off the mask which he had hitherto worn, and openly to declare himself against Robespierre, whom he now accused, in the most shameless manner, of having protected aristocrats, of having connived at peculation, and of having, for some time, prevented the arrest of Danton. To these charges, which were as ridiculous as they were false, he added another, which had some foundation in truth—namely, a design to destroy the Convention.

This foolish speech of Billaud afforded Robespierre an advantage which, had he been allowed to profit by it, would, probably, have promoted that division among his enemies which would have saved him from impending destruction. But Tallien and his coadjutors would not suffer him to be heard; they overpowered his voice with their own clamours of "Down with him;—down with the tyrant!" while Tallien, brandishing a dagger, declared he would instantly plunge it into the tyrant's heart, unless the Convention consigned him to the hands of justice. Tallien himself, though not in the tribune, assumed that privilege of speech which he unjustly withheld from the party accused. He spoke for some time, and with great art; and his motion for rendering the sittings permanent, until the creatures of Robespierre should be arrested, was carried; as were others, made by Billaud-Varennes and Delmars, for the apprehension of Dumas, Boulanger, Dufraise, Henriot, (the commander of the National Guard,) and his whole staff.

It was now to be considered what was to be done with Robespierre;—

but those who were bent on his destruction resolved that no discussion should precede it. Many of the members, though by no means friendly to him, thought it highly improper to condemn him without hearing what he had to urge in his own defence.—They were prevented, however, from delivering their sentiments by the perseverance of Tallien and his associates, who used force to repel those who attempted to ascend the tribune. Robespierre, foaming with rage, ran from one end of the hall to the other, appealing, alternately, to the members and to the galleries, but equally in vain.—He appealed also to the chair, now filled by Thuriot, who turned a deaf ear to his intreaties, and drowned his voice with the noise of his bell, which he incessantly rang. "For the last time," said Robespierre, "President of Assassins," and never was man more truly characterized, "I demand to speak!" The demand, however, was rejected; and, after a long and violent altercation, more worthy a den of thieves than an assembly of legislators, *a decree* of *accusation* was unanimously preferred against him, on the motion of Louchet, in which his brother was, at his own request, included. Similar decrees were passed against his friends, Couthon, Saint Just, and Lebas. The prisoners were sent to the Luxembourg, escorted by guards devoted to Robespierre;—the keeper of the prison refused to receive them, and they were easily rescued by the mob, who experienced no resistance from the guards. They immediately repaired to the Commune, which, apprised of the proceedings in the Convention, had already assembled. They swore, to a man, that they would remain faithful to Robespierre and his friends; they administered a similar oath to the people; declared themselves in a state of insurrection; and were joined by several of the Revolutionary Committees. The Mayor of Paris, Fleuriot Lescaut, the Solicitor to the Commune, Payan, and Coffinhal, a vice-president of the Revolutionary Tribunal, were amongst them, and their numbers were continually increasing.—The rumour of Henriot's apprehension having reached them, Coffinhal instantly sallied forth, with a few resolute followers, and rescued him. Henriot came directly to the Commune, and brought with him a powerful reinforcement.—The Jacobin Clubs were, on their part, most active; the Conventional Guard was gained over;—and nothing but courage,

decision, and energy, in Robespierre and his friends, was wanting, even now, to ensure his success.

The Convention, meanwhile, were not inactive; they proceeded to declare Robespierre and his adherents *outlaws*;—they took measures for arming the Sections; and they appointed Barras to command them. Paris now seemed to be destined, once more, to become the scene of a civil war, and her streets seemed to be again doomed to flow with the blood of her citizens. While the Convention were summoning the Sections to arms, Henriot, attended by what soldiers he could collect, hastened to summon the Convention itself to appear before the Commune. As his courage, however, required the stimulus of liquor, he had drunk to excess, and became an object of derision to the men he commanded.—The Convention outlawed the whole Commune; and the troops refused to obey the orders of their leader.—Henriot now returned to the Town-House, where all was confusion, indecision, and dismay. These men, who had lately kept twenty millions of their countrymen in a state of constant alarm and stupefaction, were now so dreadfully alarmed, and stupified, themselves, that they knew not how to act.—This strange state of things continued till night; by which time Barras had collected a few armed followers, with whom he advanced to the Town-House. This focus of rebellion, whence, for a time, those sanguinary decrees had issued which made every Frenchman tremble for his life; this arsenal of revolt, which long supplied the means of destruction to subordinate agents; this asylum for the most violent and furious spirits of Republican France; capable as it was of resistance, became panic-struck, and suffered itself to be subdued by a handful of men.—Bourdon de l'Oise, who had accompanied Barras, read the proclamation of outlawry, and then rushed into the Town-House, armed with a sabre and pistols, and accompanied by many of his followers. Not the smallest attempt at resistance was made.—Robespierre's brother leaped out of a window, and was taken miserably bruised. Lebas blew out his brains. Henriot, to whose misconduct all these disasters were ascribed, was thrown out of a window by Coffinhal, and took refuge in a common-sewer, whence he was dragged

by some soldiers, who beat out one of his eyes. Coffinhal, himself, escaped, for a time, but was afterwards apprehended. Couthon was seized.—Robespierre was fired at twice by a soldier, who wounded him in the head, and broke his jaw; and in this state he was conducted before the committee of General Security. The Convention having refused to see him, he was taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, (on the 28th of July,) together with twenty of his adherents, and, as they were outlaws, the form of a trial was dispensed with; and, their persons being identified, they were all condemned to die. They were conveyed to the scaffold, that same evening, amidst the universal execrations of the Parisians, who flocked, in crowds, to witness their execution. On the following day, sixty-two Members of the Commune, who had also been outlawed, experienced the same fate; as did some of the principal judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

The friends of humanity could not fail to contemplate this struggle with heartfelt satisfaction; for, whichever party prevailed, *their* cause must be served; while, however great the slaughter which might result from the conflict, it could only be considered as an act of retributive justice. All the combatants were, literally, *men of blood;* they had murdered their Sovereign and his family; they had consigned thousands, and tens of thousands, to the scaffold, without scruple and without remorse; and they who now exclaimed against the sanguinary projects of Robespierre, condemned them only because they affected themselves.—Tallien, the leader of the conspiracy,—for the whole transaction bore not one feature of a legal proceeding,—exhibited not a single proof of a regard for *justice;* he had been guilty of nearly as many murders as Robespierre himself;—he was deeply implicated in the massacres of September,—and, as one of the proconsuls in the South, he had displayed the most sanguinary disposition, until the ferocity of his nature was softened by the influence of love. In short, it was a contest between rival tygers, and, had they all perished in the struggle, humanity would have had reason to rejoice.

Never was a more contemptible race of beings assembled in one body, than those who now enjoyed the supreme power in France—the

members of the National Convention. They possessed no one qualification for the situations which they held:—Murder, by thinning their ranks, had deprived them of the small portion of talents which they originally possessed. They had, however, ample ability to do mischief; and they seemed still anxious to exercise it. Though the least portion of common sense would have sufficed to convince them, that the adoption of a mild and merciful system of government was not merely the best, but the only, means of preserving the popularity which they had acquired by their opposition to Robespierre, they displayed not the smallest disposition to have recourse to it. The sanguinary Barrere, on the contrary, announced, in the name of the committees, the continuance of the system of terror. But Tallien, Legendre (the butcher), and some of their immediate followers, began to fear that they had only destroyed one set of tyrants to become subject to another; they, therefore, assumed the new appellation of *Thermidorians*, from the Republican name of the month in which Robespierre was guillotined, and avowed themselves advocates for a more moderate system. Aware of their own insufficiency to form a party, strong enough to resist the Terrorists, who were now led by Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, and Barrere; they paid court to the Brissotins, their union with whom gave them the preponderance in the Convention.

The superiority thus acquired was used for the laudable purpose of bringing to justice some atrocious criminals, who had hitherto escaped her sword.—Among these were Fouquier Tinville, the public accuser; Joseph Lebon, the proconsul, at Arras; and Carrier, the conventional delegate at Nantes; than whom the Revolution, so fertile in crimes, had not produced three more sanguinary monsters. In proposing, however, the apprehension of the first of these Jacobins, Freron adopted the very language of Jacobinism itself; he moved, "That he should "be sent to expiate in hell, the blood which he had shed upon earth;— "or, in other words, for a decree of accusation against him." These men attempted to exculpate themselves, and Carrier in particular, by asserting, that they had only acted in obedience to the orders which they had received from the government; and that they had even received the thanks of the Convention for their conduct. Though

these were not bad arguments, as applied to their accusers, still they were not suffered to avail them, and they all paid, with their blood, the forfeit of their crimes, to the great satisfaction of all but their immediate associates.

But still the Terrorists obstinately maintained their ground, and contended for the victory; and it is probable they might have ultimately prevailed, but for an able manœuvre of Freron, in procuring a decree to sanction the complete liberty of the press. As soon as this was obtained, numbers of publications were circulated, for the purpose of disposing the public mind to a moderate system of government; and the effect produced was fully equal to the expectations of the party. Another law, which they induced the Convention to pass on the 16th of October, conduced still more to the success of their projects.—By this law it was declared, that all affiliations, aggregations, federations, and correspondences, in a collective name, between societies, however denominated, should be discontinued, as subversive of government, and hostile to the unity of the Republic.—No petitions, or addresses, were to be presented in a collective name; nor was any such, if presented, to be noticed by any public body. It enacted, that every society should immediately prepare a list of all its members, adding to each his age, place of birth, profession, and residence, before and since the 14th of July, 1789; and the date of his admission into the society; which lists were to be delivered to officers appointed to receive them.—And every person who should not comply with the provisions of this law, was to be considered as *suspected*, and imprisoned accordingly. Six months before, the man who should have dared to propose such a decree would, assuredly, have expiated with his life the temerity of his attempt. But the death of Robespierre had made such a change, that a measure which struck, as it were, at the very existence of the Jacobins, was suffered to pass with very little opposition. By this decree all those *affiliated* and *corresponding* societies, which had been the grand engines by which the Revolution, with all its concomitant horrors, had been produced, confirmed, and prolonged, were deprived of all the means of mischief, and of all the powers of revolt. The very body which had given its sanction and protection to

their most atrocious proceedings,—which had considered as rebels all who dared to question their purity, or to impeach their patriotism,—which had even used them as schools for the instruction of their troops in revolutionary tactics,—now publicly proclaimed the infamy of their character, the destructive tendency of their conduct,* and the incompatibility of their existence with any form of government, however despotic, severe, and absolute. And yet their English admirers did not blush to reprobate the conduct of the British Ministry in the adoption of legislative measures for the suppression of similar societies in this country.

Still the Jacobin Club at Paris continued its sittings, and vented its rage with characteristic violence; and still many members of the Convention continued their names on its books, and defended its proceedings in their seats. But every attempt to obtain a decree to prohibit the members of the Convention from belonging to this pestiferous society, proved fruitless; and it was left for a body of young men, attached to Freron, to supply the defect of legislative interference.—On the 9th of November they assembled in the different coffee-houses in the Palais Royal, and proceeded together to the hall of the Jacobins; and, having gained admission, by force, they belaboured the debating patriots with their sticks, administered the appropriate correction of the rod on the female maniacs who attended the sittings, and dispersed the whole society. The members of the Club, in the Convention, represented this outrage as unparalleled in the annals of the Revolution; in their estimation, it was a murder, a massacre, equal to the massacres in La Vendée, and called for exemplary vengeance. But their clamours were treated with merited contempt; and Rewbell, by a brief summary of their proceedings, completed their defeat.

"Where," he exclaimed, "was tyranny organized?—At the Jacobin "Club. Where were its supporters and satellites collected?—At the "Jacobin Club. Who covered France with mourning?—The Jacobins. "Who reduced whole families to despair, crowded the Republic with

* Bentabolle, in his speech of November 5th, complained of the speeches at the Jacobin Club, as having a direct tendency to excite murder and civil war.

" bastilles, and rendered the Republican system so odious, that *a slave,* " *loaded with chains, would not have exchanged his condition with a French-* " *man ?**—The Jacobins. Who are they who long to restore the " *detestable system* under which we have lived ?—The Jacobins." His speech produced such an effect on this versatile assembly, that they immediately passed a decree for shutting up the Jacobin Club, *provisionally*; and thus was this revolutionary volcano extinguished by the ingratitude of those who were indebted to it for the whole stock of their political knowledge, and for whatever portion of consequence they enjoyed in the new order of things, which it had so essentially contributed to produce; by Freron, Tallien, Legendre, and Rewbell. Addresses now poured in from all quarters, congratulating the Convention on the firmness and decision of their conduct. Before the close of this year, the enemies of the Terrorists received a further accession of strength, by a decree for restoring to liberty seventy-three deputies who had been imprisoned for entering a protest against the proceedings in Brissot's case, on the 31st of May. Such of the Brissotins, too, as had fled on that occasion, had their sentence of outlawry revoked, and were restored to all their privileges, excepting only their seats in the Convention; though, as these had only been lost by a sentence which was now annulled, it was not possible to defend the exception, upon any principle of justice.

While such was the situation of the Parent-Society in France, those seditious clubs in Great Britain, which looked up to it as a model of perfection, had, by increased audacity, hastened the period of their own dissolution. After the dispersion of the British Convention in Edinburgh, and the conviction of some of its members, means were taken for assembling another Convention, and delegates were sent from the London Corresponding Society to Scotland, for the purpose of fan-

* And yet, at the very period of which Rewbell here gives so accurate a description, were the Jacobin Clubs in Great Britain holding forth, to the deluded people of this country, the *happiness* and the *freedom* of the French, as objects of envy, for the attainment of which no sacrifice was too great. If Lord Stanhope read this speech of Rewbell, after he had proclaimed himself a Jacobin in the House of Peers, and did not blush, his feelings must have been impervious to the attacks of shame.

ning the flame of sedition. Men had been privately trained to the use of arms, as well in England as in Scotland; the necessity of providing arms had been strongly insisted on by the different societies; and many pikes had been actually supplied in Scotland. In short, there existed the most convincing proofs, not only of a plan formed in theory, to procure, by legal means, some partial change of the existing laws; but of a regular conspiracy to assemble, under the name of a Convention, a number of persons assuming to be representatives of the nation, for the express purpose of making their resolutions to be law, and of subverting, by their authority, the whole frame of the government, and the constitution of the realm, its Monarchy, its Parliament, and its fundamental laws.* The aim of the leaders in this conspiracy evidently extended to as complete a Revolution in this country, as that which had taken place in France, subsequently to the 10th of August, 1792.

It was intended, by the Members of the New Convention, as soon as a sufficient number of arms had been procured, to enable them to act openly, to seize, in the night, the principal magistrates of Edinburgh, and officers of the law; the banks, the public offices, guards, and prison; and, after enticing the troops to leave the castle, by kindling a fire in the middle of the city, to intercept them, on their return, by means of different armed parties, to be properly stationed for that purpose.†—In short, no means were omitted, within their ability to adopt, of whatever nature, to secure the accomplishment of their plan.

When sufficient proofs of these facts had been obtained, Robert Watt, and David Downie, two of the most active emissaries of sedition, were apprehended, and committed to prison. They were both tried at Edinburgh, on a charge of high treason. Watt's trial took place on the 3d of September, and Downie's on the 5th. They were both convicted and executed.

* The Second Report from the Committee of Secrecy, appointed by the House of Lords, to inspect the Report, and Original papers, &c. from the Commons, p. 14.

† Mr. Dundas's Letter to the Marquis of Stafford, dated Whitehall, 23d May, 1794.

A Special Commission was, about the same time, issued for the trial of Hardy, and the other members of the London Corresponding and Constitutional Societies, who had been arrested in England. On the sixth of October, the Grand Jury returned a true bill against Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, John Augustus Bonney, Stewart Kyd, Jeremiah Joyce, Thomas Wardle, Thomas Holcroft, John Richter, Matthew Moore, John Thelwall, Richard Hodgson, and John Baxter, for *high treason.*—Of these, Wardle, Holcroft, Moore, and Hodgson, were not in custody. On the twenty-eight of October the trials began; and the prisoners chose to be tried separately:—Thomas Hardy was then put to the bar, charged, generally, with the offence of compassing his Majesty's death. The speech of the Attorney-General, (Sir John Scott,) who conducted the prosecution, took up nine hours to deliver; the evidence for the Crown was not closed till the first of November, on which day the prisoner's defence was opened. It continued till the third, when the Solicitor-General began his reply, which he finished on the fourth; and, on the next day, the trial finished; and the jury, after three hours consideration, returned a verdict of *not guilty.* Mr. Horne Tooke, and Mr. Thelwall, were afterwards tried and acquitted, when the Attorney-General declined all further proceedings; and the other persons were, of course, discharged.—In the course of Mr. Tooke's trial, Mr. Pitt was examined, on the part of the prisoner, in order to prove, that the meeting at the Thatched-House Tavern, in 1782, of which he was a member, had the same objects in view, as the Seditious Societies of the present time. His evidence, however, totally failed to establish this laboured point.—Mr. Pitt recollected that Mr. Tooke had been present at one of those meetings, the sense of which was to use means to recommend a petition to Parliament, in order to procure a reform; but there was no such idea as a Convention of the People, or affiliated Societies; and he did not consider that as a meeting of persons authorized to act for any but themselves.*

That the jury acted most conscientiously in acquitting the prisoners

* See the printed trial of Mr. Tooke.

of the charge of high-treason there can be no doubt; but the result of the investigation by the Grand Jury, who found true bills against the prisoners, was a sufficient justification of the prosecutions. Whoever is acquainted with the nature of the evidence required to convict a British subject of so heinous a crime, will be slow to draw the hasty inference that the prisoners were all perfectly innocent. It is impossible to read the printed accounts of the trials, without being impressed with a conviction of the existence of a treasonable conspiracy, which had for its object the utter subversion of the constitution and government.* Indeed, I can assert, upon the authority of one

* Among the written documents produced on the trials, was a song, found at the house of Hardy, containing the following stanzas:—

The starving wretch, who steals for bread,
But seldom meets compassion;
And shall a Crown preserve the head
Of him who robs a nation?
Such partial laws we all despise;—
See Gallia's bright example;
The glorious sight before our eyes,
We'll on ev'ry tyrant trample.

CHORUS.

Come rouse to arms, 'tis now the time
To punish past transgressions.

Proud Bishops next we will translate
Among priest-crafted martyrs;
The Guillotine on Peers shall wait,
And Knights shall hang in garters.—
The Despots long have trod us down,
And Judges are their engines;
These wretched minions of a Crown
Demand a people's vengeance.

CHORUS.

Come rouse to arms, 'tis now the time
To punish past transgressions.

After reading all the documents, it is impossible not to concur with the opinion of the Committee of the House of Lords, who truly observed:—"The ostensible object of the several meetings, whose members were to be the followers in this conspiracy; namely, Parliamentary Reform, is a pretext that could impose on none but the most credulous, ignorant, and unwary." Report, p. 16.

of the Jurors, that the Jury themselves were fully satisfied of the existence of such a conspiracy; and had the parties been tried for a misdemeanour, there cannot be a doubt that they would have been convicted. There is reason to believe, that there existed a difference of opinion amongst the friends of Ministers, if not amongst the Ministers themselves, as to the nature of the charge on which they should be tried. And they who recommended that they should be tried for a treasonable misdemeanour only, acted most judiciously, and most wisely.—Their acquittal raised the spirits of the disaffected, who openly triumphed in the victory which they had obtained; not perceiving that this victory was the highest eulogy that could be pronounced on the British laws; and when the proceedings, against persons charged with political crimes in France, were compared with these trials, the comparison could not fail to excite, in the breast of every honest Briton, the proudest feelings of exultation.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Meeting of Parliament—Usual course of proceeding interrupted by Mr. Sheridan—Increased confidence of the Opposition—They maintain that the non-existence of plots was proved by the acquittal of the persons tried for High Treason—This opinion controverted by the Solicitor-General, and Serjeant Adair, who contended that the existence of treasonable plots had been completely proved on these trials—Conversation respecting the office of Third Secretary of State—Debate on the Address—Moved by Sir Edward Knatchbull, and seconded by Mr. Canning—Amendment moved by Mr. Wilberforce—Opposed by Mr. Windham—He represents the fatal consequences of a premature peace—Quotes a seditious Song—Mr. Pitt's Speech—He admits the possibility of being obliged to treat with the French Republic; but expects no security except from a Monarchical Government—Remarks on the conduct of Mr. Wilberforce, and his friends—His weakness and pusillanimity exposed—Mr. Pitt shews that the death of Robespierre had produced no change in the conduct of the French Government to Foreign States—Contrast between the English and French constitutions; and between the financial resources of the two countries—Enormous expenditure of France—Mr. Fox's Speech—Insists on the necessity of Peace—Compliments Mr. Wilberforce—Expresses his determination to call Ministers to account for their misconduct—Imputes the war to a Court-Party, who hate Liberty, and are indifferent to the distresses of the people—Amendment rejected by two-hundred-and-forty-six votes against seventy-three—Address carried—Mr. Sheridan's motion for the repeal of the Act for suspending the Habeas-Corpus Act—He condemns Ministers—Reprobates the War—Insists that a verdict of Acquittal is a full proof of innocence—Is answered by Mr. Windham, who reproves the officiousness of his zeal; and points out the convenient defect of his memory—His character of Mr. Sheridan's Speech—He describes it as an appeal to the Jacobin Clubs—He defends the Whig-leaders against the attacks of Mr. Sheridan; and opposes the Shield of Character to the Shafts of Calumny—Mr. Erskine and Mr. Fox support the motion—Motion rejected by one-hundred-and-forty-four against forty-one—The Attorney-General's motion for renewing the Act of Suspension—Opposed by Mr. Lambton—Cases adduced by the Attorney-General to disprove the assertion, that the moral innocence of a party accused is established by a verdict of Acquittal—Bill passed—Renewed operations of the French in Holland—They pass the Waal on the ice—Compel the British army to retreat—Base conduct of the Dutch to the British troops—The troops are exposed to great hardships—They reach Bremen—Kind and hospitable treatment of them by the inhabitants—They return to England—Emigration of the Stadtholder—Abolition of the office—Treaty of Alliance between the Dutch and French Republics—Proposed augmentation of our army—Opposed by Mr. Fox—Defended by Mr. Pitt—

Mr. Grey's motion on the subject of Peace—Explicit declaration of Mr. Pitt, that no form of government in France would operate as an impediment to Peace—He moves an amendment to the motion—True state of the Question—Mr. Pitt answered by Mr. Fox—Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Henry Thornton support the motion—Motion rejected by two-hundred-and-sixty-nine against eighty-six—Amendment carried—Similar motion in the House of Peers negatived—Mr. Pitt introduces a new plan for manning the Navy—Conversation on the Subject—Proposal of Mr. Harrison for procuring men for the Navy by a Tax on Places and Pensions—Absurdity and injustice of the proposal demonstrated—Debates on the Imperial Loan—Petitions for Peace—New motion of Mr. Grey on the subject—Negatived by a great Majority—A similar motion negatived by the House of Peers—Mr. Pitt opens the Budget—New Taxes—Mr. Fox's motion for an inquiry into the State of the Nation—His remarks on Irish Affairs—Answered by Mr. Pitt, who moves to adjourn—Mr. Sheridan's Speech—Remarks on the necessity of removing Ministers—Motion for the Adjournment carried—Mr. Wilberforce's motion respecting Peace—Mr. Windham's Speech—Motion supported by Mr. Fox—Resisted by Mr. Pitt—Negatived by the House—Provision for the establishment of the Prince of Wales—Difficulties attending the arrangement of it—Plan finally adopted by Mr. Pitt—He introduces the Subject to the House—Long Debates on it—Great difference of opinion—Reflections on the Question—Statement of Mr. Sheridan respecting the Royal Message of 1787—Contradicted by Mr. Dundas—Prince's right to the proceeds of the Dutchy of Cornwall, during his minority, discussed—Disrespect shewn to the King—Jacobinical declaration of Mr. Fox,—that *the King is the Servant of the People*—Just remarks of Mr. Dundas—Animadversions on the whole proceeding—Its final Arrangement.

[1794.] The Parliament met again on the thirtieth of December.—In the Speech from the Throne, while the disasters of the late campaign were admitted, they were not allowed to supply any reasons for diminishing the vigour of exertion so necessary for the pursuit of the war. On the contrary, additional vigour, and additional efforts, were held out as the only possible means of bringing it to a successful issue. —The Dutch government, indeed, dispirited by the reverses which the allies had experienced, had opened a negotiation with the prevailing party in France.—But the King expressed his conviction, that no established government, or independent state, could, under the present circumstances, derive real security from such negotiations; and that they could not be attempted by this country, without sacrificing both her honour and her safety to an enemy, whose chief animosity was avowedly directed against her. The acquired sovereignty of Corsica,—the treaty recently concluded with America,—and the approaching marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Princess Caroline of Bruns-

wick, were the other objects recommended by his Majesty to the attention of Parliament.

At the opening of every Session of Parliament, it is customary, in the Commons, to read "the Bill for the prosecuting of Clandestine Outlawries," merely for the purpose of asserting their independence, by shewing their right to proceed with any business they choose.—But as the Speaker was pursuing the usual form, and putting the question as a matter of course, which had never given rise to any discussion, Mr. Sheridan rose to oppose it, in order to deliver his sentiments on the late trials and on the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act.—Although the right to do this was unquestionable, yet the act was not only ungracious, but, at this period, when French principles were diffusing their baneful influence around, highly disrespectful to the King, the consideration of whose speech it, of necessity, delayed. The Opposition appeared to have acquired great confidence and boldness from the late successes of the French, and from the acquittal of the persons charged with high treason. They did not scruple to declare, that the House was not free, that the members were not capable of entering upon a fair, full, and impartial discussion of public questions, until the act of the late Sessions, for detaining suspected persons, was repealed. And they expressed the greatest exultation on the issue of the late trials, which they boldly asserted, proved the perfect innocence of the parties accused, and demonstrated the non-existence of those plots and conspiracies which had formed the pretext for passing the obnoxious act in question.* These preposterous assertions, however, were strongly repelled by the Solicitor-General (Mr. Mitford), and Mr. Serjeant Adair, who insisted that what passed at the trials, far from negativing a treasonable conspiracy, had established its existence beyond the possibility of a doubt; and that a verdict of acquittal was no proof of innocence, but only prevented the party acquitted from being brought to trial again for the same offence. Similar opinions were maintained by Mr. Pitt, who considered that the Jury had only negatived the establish-

* See the Speeches of Messrs. Sheridan, Fox, Jekyll, and Lambton, in Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1794-5, p. 63—74.

ment of the charge, in the manner and form stated in the indictment, by adequate legal evidence; they had not disproved the existence of the serious grounds of alarm, or negatived that part of the charge which had been the reason and cause of the suspension of the Habeas-Corpus Act;—namely that these persons were parties to a conspiracy, and if not to treason, to a crime as great in moral guilt, and as dangerous to the rights and privileges of Parliament, and to the tranquillity of the country, as treason, or any other offence, possibly could be.

The Opposition having attained their object by producing a debate, and uttering such sentiments as could not fail to produce their effect, out of the House, suffered the usual bill to be read.—This being done, they produced another subject of altercation, by contending that Mr. Dundas had vacated his seat, by accepting the office of Third Secretary of State, which had been abolished by the Act of the twenty-second year of his present Majesty, commonly called Mr. Burke's Bill, and the revival of which subjected the person accepting the situation to the loss of his seat in the House, if a member of it, and to the penalty of 500*l.*, if he continued to sit as a member.

It was shewn, however, that Mr. Dundas held precisely the same situation which he had held in the preceding session; and that, although there were three Secretaries, the Duke of Portland, who had recently accepted the situation of one of them, must be considered as the third Secretary. This point being settled, the address, on the speech from the Throne, was moved by Sir Edward Knatchbull, and seconded by Mr. Canning, who, as usual, enforced the topics recommended in the speech. Mr. Canning, in adverting to the misfortunes of the last campaign, remarked that it was true the Opposition had foretold the desertion of the allies, and the astonishing exertions of the enemy; and he could not but confess, that, unfortunately, the event had justified the prediction.—Here, however, he pertinently observed, that it was no difficult matter to prophesy ill success;—if the prediction proved false, gentlemen would feel too much gratification in the success of their country, to think of the prediction; if it proved true, those who made it would triumph, as they would certainly feel some satis-

faction at their own superior sagacity.—Some predictions, on the other hand, had been made by Ministers, and by those who had supported the war, which had been equally justified by the event. While the Opposition had represented the government of France as stable and secure, the Ministers and their friends, had predicted its speedy downfal. When Robespierre was at the height of his power,—when he governed France with the most absolute sway, — when his will was received throughout the Republic as law,—even then his ruin was predicted;—the event had demonstrated the justice of these predictions.

It was not left, on this occasion, to the systematic opposers of government, to propose an amendment to the address. That task was now undertaken by Mr. Wilberforce, who had originally supported the war; but who, from the events of the last campaign, seemed to think it a hopeless struggle. The ground on which he opposed the address was, that it pledged the House to a continuance of the war, until a counter-revolution should be produced in France. To this pledge he could by no means consent; and, therefore, he proposed to declare to his Majesty the opinion of the House, that it was adviseable he should order a negotiation to be opened on such terms as to his wisdom and goodness should seem right. He was supported by several country gentlemen, who usually voted with the Minister; but who concurred in the opinion, that any attempt to make an impression on France would prove ineffectual, and that an effort should be made to procure peace on safe and honourable terms.

The proposition was strongly opposed by Mr. Windham, who contrasted the conduct, now recommended to the government, with that of the French, who, when attacked on all sides, instead of feeling despondency, only increased their exertions to meet the coming danger. He considered peace as not within our reach; and represented the consequences of it, if attainable, as worse than the continuance of the war. In the event of a peace, the intercourse between the two countries must be opened, when the French would pour in their emissaries, and all the English infected with French principles, whom we had now the means of excluding, would return to disseminate their

abominable tenets among the people. A Jacobinical Club would be erected at every man's door;—an inquisition would be immediately instituted into the right of property; and a Convention might even be established in the neighbourhood of the House of Commons. With what views would the French come? With the views very forcibly expressed in a song, sung, with great applause, at one of those *innocent* Societies, as they were now called, a stanza of which Mr. Windham repeated.

"They come, they come, the myriads come,
From Gallia to invade us;
Raise, raise the pike,—beat, beat the drum,
They come, like friends, to aid us."

They would go among our poor, among our labourers, among our manufacturers, and teach them the doctrine of liberty and equality. They would point out the gilded palaces of the rich, and tell them they ought to be plundered and demolished for the benefit of the poor. Having drawn this gloomy picture of the state of the country, in case a peace were made, he exhorted the House, and the country, in a strain of animating eloquence, to display a spirit more worthy of themselves and of their cause.

The arguments of Mr. Wilberforce and his friends, were combatted by Mr. Pitt, who corrected an error under which they laboured, by shewing that the address by no means pledged them to continue the war until the destruction of the French Republic could be effected.—He then deprecated, most earnestly, the display of that pusillanimous spirit, which must be manifested, in a disgraceful solicitation for peace, after the experience of one unsuccessful campaign.

Mr. Pitt, finding himself suddenly indisposed, was anxious to deliver his sentiments on the question before he had heard the arguments of any of the leaders of Opposition; and he assigned this reason to the House. With a view to remove the scruples entertained by Mr. Wilberforce, and his friends, he declared that he by no means considered an approbation of the address as pledging the House *never* to make a peace with the *Republican* government of France;—for the

address said nothing more than that, from such a government as the present government of that country, we could not treat on terms that could be deemed secure. He admitted, as he had done on former occasions, that it might become necessary to open a negotiation with the Republic; but he repeated his opinion, that no peace would be secure, unless France returned to a monarchical system. He expressed his surprise, that those who had admitted the justice of the war, and the necessity of opposing the abominable system of the Revolutionary government of France, should be disposed to abandon the contest, after one year's ineffectual struggle.—It had pleased Providence, whose ways were inscrutable, that the power of France should triumph over all opposition;—but we should not, therefore, fall, without adequate efforts to resist it; we should not sink without measuring its strength. The consciousness of inability to pursue it could alone make him agree to retire from the contest. He would, at least, have nothing to reproach himself with on the retrospect. He would not yield till he could exclaim,—

> —— Potuit quæ plurima virtus
> Esse fuit, toto certamen est corpore regni.

Mr. Pitt spoke with great warmth, and jutified his warmth by the peculiarity of his situation, in being obliged to oppose and contest the opinions of men with whom he had, on almost all subjects, been accustomed to agree. Indeed, the advice given by Mr. Wilberforce, Sir Richard Hill, and others, who had admitted the danger which threatened this kingdom from the Revolutionary torrent of France, and who had acknowledged the necessity of resisting not only her destructive principles, but her insatiate ambition, was the advice of weak and pusillanimous minds. It never, surely, could have been supposed, that the subversion of the Revolutionary system, or the destruction of the Revolutionary power, could be effected in a single campaign; and yet on this ground alone could these members justify their present conduct. They voted for the war as necessary; they still maintained that it was so; and yet, in consequence of the disasters of a single campaign, they were willing to forego its object without a further struggle. In a word, they approved the *end*, but refused to supply the *means*, of attaining it.

The pretexts, urged in support of this inconsistent conduct, were minutely examined by Mr. Pitt, who shewed, that although Robespierre had been destroyed, and some mitigation of the system of terror had resulted from his death, no change had taken place in the government, and none of the Revolutionary principles had been disavowed. —On the contrary, the very basis, and the form, of the whole superstructure was carefully preserved;—the Republic was still one and indivisible;—it was still founded on liberty and equality;—its ruler still persisted in their efforts to revolutionize the neighbouring states;—and still their pride and their ambition led them to carry desolation and destruction into all the governments of Europe. It was well, indeed, observed, that the mild principles of the British Constitution were a standing reproach to the destructive tenets of the French Republican system, which were as intolerant as the rankest popish bigotry.

They could have paid very little attention to the motives and conduct of the leading men in France, who could derive from the late change any sanguine expectation of the adoption of a line of conduct more compatible with the peace and security of foreign states. *Fear*, not *principle*, influenced that change, which, though it afforded rather more security to the persons of Frenchmen, made not the least difference in the views or conduct of the rulers, in respect of other powers. In regard to this country, in particular, there was no more difference between Tallien and Robespierre, than there had been between Robespierre and Brissot. They were all actuated by the same rooted hatred; the same inveterate malignity; the same determined hostility, against Great Britain; which they all considered as the only insurmountable obstacle to the accomplishment of their grand plan, for subverting all the existing establishments of Europe, to which every successive party has adhered with wonderful perseverance, and with inflexible resolution.

Many other strong arguments were pressed upon the House, by Mr. Pitt, in opposition to the proposed amendment; particularly applying to the insecurity of any peace which could now be concluded, and to the disadvantages under which we should labour on the renewal of war; deprived of all our allies, and unable, for some time, to bring our

resources into action. Towards the end of his speech he adverted to the comparative state of the financial resources of the two countries.—He shewed that the expenditure of France had amounted to no less than the enormous sum of four hundred and eighty millions, since the commencement of the war.—It had cost her three hundred and twenty millions to expel the allies from the Austrian Netherlands, and to drive them beyond the Rhine. That no durable resources had enabled them to expend these vast sums, was clearly demonstrated by the creation of an unlimited paper credit. It appeared, however, from the acknowledgements of the French themselves, that so much of this money had been already issued, that any increase of it would be productive of ruin; and that the miseries which it occasioned aggravated all the calamities of the country. The whole circulating medium of France never exceeded ninety millions sterling. In August, 1793, assignats had been issued to the amount of one hundred and forty millions;—commerce was then in a declining state; agriculture was discouraged; population checked; and a forced loan of forty millions was adopted, on the belief, that more assignats had been already issued than could obtain circulation. In fact, the assignats soon lost nearly half their value. Afterwards, a louis-d'or produced one hundred and forty-four livres, or six times its real value. The system of terror now began, and credit was extorted by fear. Laws passed to compel the people to take assignats at par; a maximum was fixed on all saleable commodities; and the penalty of twenty years imprisonment was inflicted on every man who, harassed and ruined by these violent measures, should abandon his trade or calling. Revolutionary committees were employed, in every part of the Republic, at no less an expence than *twenty-six millions sterling* per annum, to enforce compliance with the fiscal mandates of the Convention.

Before the death of Robespierre the assignats, in circulation, had been increased to two hundred and sixty millions; and, three months after that period, they had fallen to *one-fourth* of their nominal value. From these circumstances, Mr. Pitt inferred that the resources of the French must speedily fail; and that they would, consequently, be unable to make the same exertions which they had hitherto made.

This inference would have been just, had it been in the power of the allies to force back the French armies beyond their own frontier; and to reduce the government to the necessity of maintaining their troops by the internal resources of the country. In such case, indeed, with an exhausted treasury, and diminished commerce, it would have been impossible for them to support the armed multitude which they had sent into the field, or to renew those gigantic efforts which the combined results of terror and profusion had enabled them to display.—But it was part of their original plan to make the neighbouring countries defray the expence of their own subjugation, and provide the means for a further extension of the same ravages and desolation which they had themselves experienced. Thus they subsisted their armies on the plunder of foreign states, and, therefore, no calculation, founded on the inadequacy of their internal resources, could properly apply to the question of their inability to support the war for any given time, unless there existed a certainty of confining them within their own limits.

All the inferences and statements of Mr. Pitt were strongly impeached by Mr. Fox, who entered into a very long dissertation on the calamities of the war, and the necessity of peace. He paid some compliments to Mr. Wilberforce, but warned him, and his friends, that they must not expect that any assistance which they could afford him, in his attempts to obtain a speedy peace, would deter him from instituting an enquiry into the causes of the war, or from the adoption of measures for the prevention of similar calamities in future. The high and authoritative tone which he now assumed, ridiculous and mistimed as it was, supplied a strong proof of the value which he placed on this unexpected accession of Parliamentary strength. He ascribed both this war and the American war to the influence of a court party in this country, which hated the very name of liberty; and to an indifference, amounting to barbarity, in the Minister to the distresses of the people. Whatever effect his *arguments* might be calculated to produce, must have been counteracted by such silly declamation as this; which could only afford an apt thesis for the inflammatory harangues of the disaffected. Notwithstanding an addition of members, the Opposition

divided only seventy-three in support of the amendment, which was rejected by a majority of two hundred and forty-six.

At the close of his speech, Mr. Fox had cast some reflections on the conduct of the Admiralty, which had been echoed by Mr. Sheridan;—but Lord Chatham was fully vindicated by Mr. Dundas, who explained the great exertions made by the Admiralty during his lordship's administration, and the success of which they had been productive.—Twenty ships of the line had been taken or destroyed, besides twenty-eight frigates, and as many other ships of war; while we had lost only one sail of the line, three frigates, and sixteen smaller vessels. Previous to this discussion, Lord Chatham had quitted the Admiralty, and was succeeded by Earl Spencer.

[1795.] The Opposition, as has been seen, had displayed great activity at the opening of the present Parliamentary campaign; and, flattered perhaps by the additional numbers which had graced their last division, they resolved on a new trial of strength, on the 5th of January, when Mr. Sheridan proposed to repeal the act of the last session, which was generally, though improperly, termed, an Act for suspending the Habeas-Corpus Act. He entered into a long and elaborate declamation, in support of his motion, the object of which was to condemn the whole conduct of Ministers; to impeach the justice and necessity of the war; to deny the existence of all seditious and treasonable conspiracies; to insist that the innocence of the persons tried for high treason was established by the verdicts of acquittal; to abuse those noblemen and gentlemen who had recently accepted places under government; to revile the French Monarchy, and to panegyrize the Republic! On these various topics Mr. Sheridan expatiated with his usual zeal, wasting all the flowers of his fancy, and exhausting all the stores of his genius. The freedom of his animadversions, and the unguarded looseness of his charges, provoked a severe retort from Mr. Windham, who, in a speech of considerable length and ability, replete with pointed censure and cutting sarcasm, administered reproof, not more severe than deserved. He checked the officious zeal of Mr. Sheridan in commenting upon his conduct to Mr. Fox;—he corrected his numerous

misrepresentations of facts;—he exposed his artful, but unfair, appeals to the passions of the populace;—he ridiculed his affected tenderness and sensibility;—and he demonstrated the weakness of his arguments, on all the main points of the question. In his remarks on Mr. Sheridan's triumphant panegyric on juries, and on the efficacy of their decisions in proving the non-existence of a conspiracy, Mr. Windham taxed him with a most convenient want of memory, which had led him entirely to overlook the decisions of those juries by whose verdicts Watt and Downie had been consigned to the gallows. In the extravagance of his respect for juries, he had mentioned the acquittals, but he chose to bury in silence the convictions, and artfully kept them out of sight. He asked Mr. Sheridan, whether he would deny that there were bodies of men straining every nerve, taking infinite pains, and exerting their malice, to subvert the order of government, on the model of the French Revolution, and, by means the most dangerous, namely, by appealing to the ignorance and miseries of the poor,—the very *stratum* on which those modern engineers, who knew their trade better than any former professors of their science, intended to carry on their *sap?* He characterized Mr. Sheridan's speech as a wretched, vague, coarse, rhapsody, founded on vulgar topics of extravagant declamation, fit only for the lowest orders of society, and calculated for the meridian of such hearts and intellects as it was intended for; such as those of the applauded Mr. Broomhead, and the other *worthy citizens*, who were crammed into the *honest* Jacobin Societies, scattered through the manufacturing towns of Great Britain.* Mr. Windham defended the Duke of Portland, himself, and other leaders of the Whig party, from the sarcastic attacks of Mr. Sheridan, in a strain of dignified severity.—Truly did he observe, "The calumnies cast on such things are only to be resisted by the shield of character;—to that my noble friends and I resort! I am truly sorry he is not ashamed of such low, mean traffic. I defy him to shew a single circumstance that can tend to cast a shadow of doubt on our conduct.—The malice of the design is so corrected by the impotency of the effort, that I will not sacrifice a word in answering it."

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795, p. 174.

It was in vain that both Mr. Erskine and Mr. Fox lent their united eloquence in support of their friend's motion.—It was lost by a majority of a hundred and forty-four—*forty-one* only having voted in favour of it. And a few days after, the Attorney-General brought in a bill for leave to continue the provisions of this reprobated act. It was read a second time on the 23d of January, when the subject once more underwent a very long discussion. Mr. Lambton took the lead in opposition to the measure, and was supported by Messrs. Jekyll, Erskine, Fox, and Grey; while the bill was supported, chiefly, by the law officers of the Crown. The Attorney-General, in alluding to the often-controverted point of the efficacy of a verdict to establish the moral innocence of the party acquitted, adduced some strong cases to prove that it could not possibly have any such effect.

No man, he insisted, who pretended to know any thing of the theory of the law; no man who knew any thing of its practice, would for a moment contend, that a verdict of *not guilty* was a full establishment of the moral innocence of the party accused. He instanced, in support of this assertion, the case of a charge of high treason being directly, and positively, supported by the testimony of a gentleman of the highest integrity, of the most unblemished honour, to the complete satisfaction and full conviction of every one who heard him;—still, if there were no other evidence, the prisoner must be acquitted, because the law imperatively requires *two* witnesses to establish every overt act of treason. Here, then, would be a verdict of *not guilty* in a case in which every person must be satisfied of the real guilt of the party acquitted. Other cases were adverted to, in which a prisoner must be acquitted by the jury notwithstanding his own confession of his guilt; could any man in his senses think that, in such cases, a verdict of *not guilty* was a proof of the moral innocence of the prisoner? The Attorney-General, in further corroboration of his argument, instanced a remarkable fact which had occurred on these very trials.—While he was contending for the meaning of a paper published by one of the societies, and Mr. Erskine was maintaining that it would not bear the meaning for which he contended, that very society published another paper, avowing that their meaning, in the former publication, was

precisely that which he had put upon it. Yet the law of evidence would not allow the Attorney-General to produce the second paper to prove the meaning of the first, because it had been written after the prisoner had been taken into custody.

Here were facts which could not be controverted, and which were sufficient to convince scepticism itself of the absurdity of the principle contended for; but it did not suit the purposes of the party to be so convinced; they did not choose to sacrifice, at the shrine of truth, any prejudice, or any pretext, which might serve either to encourage the spirit of discontent, or to direct the public indignation against the Minister. The bill was, however, ordered to be read a second time, by a great and decisive majority; and, in a few days, it received the final sanction of both Houses, and became a law.

During these political discussions, the French had, very unexpectedly, renewed their military operations in Holland, and, early in the month of December, 1794, they attempted to cross the Waal. The opposition they experienced was firm and, partially, successful; but the unusual severity of winter, by early rendering the water one firm compact body of ice, sufficiently solid to bear the troops and their artillery, enabled the French to accomplish their objects with comparative facility. All the efforts of the Stadtholder to rouse the spirit of the people to exertions adequate to the exigency which called for them having proved ineffectual, that Prince resolved to leave his country to her fate, and to emigrate to England;—whither, also, the British commander had repaired at the close of the year. It was now evident that the democratic party, in Holland, prevailed over the opposite interest, and that the presence of the French was rather desired than dreaded. Resistance was, however, still made to the progress of the French by the British, now under the command of General Walmoden. In December and January, some severe actions were fought, in which the English troops displayed their wonted bravery, and sustained the honour of their country; but the superior numbers of the French compelled them to retire; and, as the enemy had pushed on in great force, between them and the Dutch coast, they were compelled to

retreat, by a circuitous road, towards the north coast of Germany. During this toilsome and dangerous retreat, they experienced from the Dutch, in behalf of whom they had fought and bled, the most base ingratitude, and the most savage treatment. With the greatest difficulty could they procure, from these unfeeling wretches, either food or shelter; the inconveniences which they experienced from the inclemency of the season were thus aggravated, and their dangers increased. After suffering incredible hardships, however, the shattered remains of this gallant army reached Bremen, where, and in the neighbourhood, the kind, humane, generous, and benevolent conduct of the inhabitants afforded an admirable contrast to the scene which they had lately witnessed in Holland. They remained here some weeks, and then embarked for England. After their retreat, the Dutch extended their supplicating arms to the French invaders; they hailed, as friends, the enemies of their name and race;—and hastened to conclude with them a disgraceful treaty, by which they formed a perpetual alliance against Great Britain, offensive and defensive; consented to pay upwards of four millions sterling to the French to indemnify them for the expence of invading and plundering their country; abolished the office of Stadtholder; opened the navigation of the Scheldt; resigned their dock-yards to the French;—and, in short, subjected themselves, and their country, to the iron yoke of French tyranny.*

In order to counteract the effects of the secession of the Dutch from the confederacy, and to obviate, as far as possible, the inconveniences of the approaching desertion of the Prussian Monarch, which, it was evident, would soon take place, it was resolved, by the Minister, to make a considerable addition to our army. On the 21st of January, Mr. Windham, as Secretary at War, laid the army estimates before the House of Commons;—when it appeared that the army, for the service of the present year, was proposed to consist of one hundred and nineteen thousand men, inclusive of invalids. In the course of the debate, which ensued on this proposal, severe censures were passed upon Ministers for the mode adopted for the increase of the army, by

* This treaty was signed at the Hague, on the 15th of May, 1795.

suffering inexperienced youths to raise regiments for rank; and some instances of this kind, highly prejudicial to the service, were adduced by General Tarleton. It was further urged, that many of the men who composed these regiments were wholly unfit for service, some being incapacitated by age, and others by extreme youth. Other grounds of objection were pressed against the proposed augmentation, on the plea that the navy ought to be the principal concern of the country at such a crisis, and that our army ought to be but a secondary consideration. This plea was strongly urged by Mr. Fox, who asserted that the army had much more than its due proportion when examined with the navy. He reprobated the project of sending more British troops to the Continent, as wild, visionary, and destructive; and he contended, that if more of the troops were to be so employed, the army was much too large. He dwelt long on his favourite topic of peace, and, in his zeal to promote it, denied the adequacy of the resources of this country to maintain the war against France. If the present was not the last, it was certainly an approach to our last stake.* Having charged Mr. Pitt with levity, in speaking of the misfortunes of the war, the Minister retorted on him, and appealed to the House, whether, in treating of those misfortunes, Mr. Fox, speaking in a tone of exultation, coupled with an affected lamentation, had not displayed a degree of triumph which the detail of our disasters was but ill-calculated to inspire? In describing our past failures, and our present situation, it was observed, that there certainly was much to lament, something to censure, but nothing to deprive us of hope. No division resulted from this discussion; the army estimates were all voted by the House.

It was thought proper, by the members of the Opposition, to divert the attention of Ministers from the important subjects by which they were naturally engrossed, in the present posture of affairs, by calling upon the House of Commons to record an abstract declaration of their *opinion*, that the existence of the present government of

* Whoever is unaccustomed to appreciate the assertions of party-men, and compares this declaration of Mr. Fox with his subsequent conduct, when Minister, *eleven years after this period*, in supporting the proposal for increasing the Property Tax, from *six* to *ten per cent.* will find some ground for astonishment.

France ought not to be considered as precluding, at that time, a negotiation for peace. Mr. Grey was selected for the task of submitting this proposition to the House, which he performed with considerable talent, in a speech of great length, in which he described our situation as hopeless, and our Ministers as incapable, and undeserving of confidence; and recurred to the old topic—the absolute necessity of opening an immediate negotiation with the French. To the motion of Mr. Grey, Mr. Pitt moved, as an amendment, "That, under the present circumstances, the House felt itself called upon to declare its determination, firmly and steadily, to support his Majesty in the vigorous prosecution of the present just, and necessary war, as affording at that time, the only reasonable expectation of permanent security and peace to this country: and that, for the attainment of those objects, the House relied, with equal confidence, on his Majesty's intention to employ, vigorously, the resources of the country in support of its essential interests, and on the desire uniformly manifested by his Majesty to effect a pacification on just and honourable grounds with any government in France, under whatever form, which should appear capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other countries."

It was on this occasion explicitly declared by Mr. Pitt, that although the Ministers had been uniformly of opinion that it would be highly desirable to promote the success of any party in France which should be favourable to a monarchical form of government, the restoration of Monarchy, on the old principles, had never been stated by his Majesty, by Government, or by Parliament, as a *sine quâ non*, as a necessary preliminary to peace. Not only was this the fact, but, farther, it had never been stated, that any one specific and particular form of government was deemed, on our part, necessary before we could negotiate for peace. His Majesty had disclaimed all desire to interfere in the internal concerns of France, as long as that country had abstained from interference with the governments of other nations;—till an act of direct and absolute aggression had been committed against this country, and till hostilities had actually commenced, his Majesty had strictly adhered to his declaration, and forborne all interference what-

ever. When compelled to interfere, in a manner agreeable to every experience and practice of the world, and justifiable on every plain principle of the law of nations, his Majesty still restrained himself to that degree of interference which was necessary for his own security, and for that of Europe.—The only species of government which he then wished to see established, was not that which he deemed most eligible; it was not that which he thought most free from objection; but any government which would be sufficient for ensuring the safety of other nations. When his Majesty was reduced to the necessity of looking at the government of France, he looked at it, certainly, not without a wish which must naturally arise in every generous heart, that it might be adapted to the prosperity and happiness of those who were to live under it;—but with regard to negotiation and to peace, he did not look at it with that view, or for that purpose.—He could only look at it for English views, and for English purposes; to see whether it held out the solid grounds of treating, with that degree of reasonable security for the performance of engagements which usually subsisted, and was to be found in the existing system of the different powers of Europe, without being liable to that new and unexampled order of things,—that state of anarchy and confusion, which had for years existed in France. Such having been the true measure and extent of the declarations made by his Majesty, and by Parliament, it was conceived, that no man who looked back on them would wish that he had not made them; that no man would feel that they were not made on just principles, or that they did not arise from a fair view of the circumstances and necessity of the case.

Here the views and the declarations of government, respecting their intentions, or desire, of restoring monarchy in France, were so clearly and distinctly stated, that they could henceforth be subject only to *wilful* misrepresentation.—In fact, it was always perfectly clear, to those whose eyes were not obscured by the mist of party, that the restoration of the French monarchy was never the *object* of the war; but was merely considered as the best *means* for the accomplishment of its object.—If the object could be accomplished without it, the

war would, of course, cease; if not, it was not only the policy, but the duty, of Ministers to endeavour to restore the Monarchy.

Two questions arose on this discussion, on which the parties were at issue.—It was contended, first, that the form of government in a country with which we were at war ought never to be considered as having any influence on the security of a treaty; and, secondly, that the Revolutionary government of France, at any time since the destruction of the monarchy, had been perfectly competent to afford the necessary security for the observance of any treaty which it might conclude with another country. The affirmative of these propositions was maintained by the Opposition, while the Ministers supported the negative.

Mr. Pitt asked if any man would say, that a nation like France, put into a situation perfectly new, into a situation directly the reverse of all the existing governments on earth, destroying the foundations and the bonds of all political society, breaking down the distinction of all ranks, and subverting the security of all property; a government pretending to put a whole nation into a state of pretended equality, not the equality of laws, but an actual equality, an equality contrary to the physical inequality of man;—would any man say, that we ought to make peace with a government constructed upon such principles, which had attempted, by every means in its power, to molest its neighbours, to impoverish and distress itself, to propagate its pernicious principles, to make converts, and to hold out the means of seducing other nations, and which had followed up such conduct by open and direct acts of aggression, by a positive violation of treaties; and, lastly, by an open declaration of war? This country scrupulously observed a neutrality, while it could hope, or have a reasonable prospect, that the mischiefs of the French Revolution would be confined within the territory which gave it birth. We remained passive spectators of the conduct of France, until the very moment when we, against our will, was forced into the contest.

Having stated his reasons for concluding that no treaty with the

existing government of France could afford the requisite security, Mr. Pitt proceeded to observe, that such a change might take place in that government, as would justify an attempt to treat with it. If such a change should occur, and such an order of things should arrive, through whatever road, and by whatever means; if the French gave to their government that stability, and that authority, which might afford grounds, not of certainty, but of moral probability (by which human affairs must be conducted), that we might treat for peace with security,—then would be the proper time to negotiate; but we ought, in prudence, to wait the return of such circumstances as would afford us a probability of treating with success.

All the arguments of Mr. Pitt were combatted by Mr. Fox, who repeated his assertion, that the existing government of France was as capable of preserving the relations of peace and amity with other nations, as any other government; but he adduced neither arguments nor facts to destroy the efficacy of Mr. Pitt's reasoning on the subject. He asserted, indeed, that, if peace were to take place, the French must disband their armies, and, if the mighty machine, which nothing but the *diabolical confederacy of despots* had put in motion, were once stopped, it would be impossible again to erect it.* But, in the first place, it was by no means certain that peace could be obtained by any declaration on our part; and, in the next, if obtained, it did not follow that those effects would result from it. He still persisted in ascribing the murder of the King, the system of terror, and all the calamities which France and Europe had experienced, in consequence of the French Revolution, to the confederacy, which he so emphatically characterized;—although it had been demonstrated, beyond the power of contradiction, or the possibility of doubt, that that confederacy was formed solely on a principle of self preservation; that the members of it were extremely averse from war; that they exerted every effort to prevent its occurrence; and that they did not prepare for it until

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795, p. 415.—Mr. Fox lived long enough to be convinced of the weakness of his own assertions.—He lived to see that peace with France for which he had so long and so earnestly wished;—and to see it productive of no one of those effects which he so confidently predicted as its necessary consequence.

France had actually declared war against them! Mr. Grey's motion was supported by Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Henry Thornton, the former of whom, however, wished to alter the language of it. On the division, eighty-six members voted for it, and two hundred and sixty-nine against it;—and, on the division on Mr. Pitt's amendment, the numbers for it were two hundred and fifty-four, and against it ninety.

A similar motion, though not precisely in the same words, was brought forward, the next day, in the House of Peers, when Lord Grenville moved the same amendment, which had been carried in the Lower House.—The motion was negatived, and the amendment carried by eighty-eight votes against fifteen.

Much had been said, in the course of debate, during this Session, on the necessity of greatly augmenting our naval force. This, in regard to ships, was a matter of no difficulty; but it was not so easy to find a sufficiency of seamen for manning the ships, when equipped for service. Mr. Pitt, therefore, had directed his attention to the best means of facilitating the accomplishment of an object so important in every point of view.—And, on the second day of February, he opened, to the House of Commons, a plan which he had devised for this purpose. This plan was stated to be productive of two advantages.—It would first relieve the outward-bound trade of the country from the inconvenience resulting from an uncertain degree of pressing; and, secondly, it would prevent the necessity of an embargo, a measure which had been resorted to in former wars. He proposed that every merchantman, previous to clearing out, should supply a given number of men, in proportion to its tonnage, for the service of the Royal Navy. This regulation would operate as an embargo on every individual ship, until it had furnished its particular quota. From examination of the Custom-House books for 1793, down to the month of September, it appeared that the total of the shipping of Scotland and England, employed one hundred thousand men, and that the proportion of men to the tonnage was about one man to every fourteen tons. It was proposed to take one seaman out of every seven that were employed; though it was not necessary that they should all be able men, as an option was

to be offered to the ship-owners, to supply two landsmen instead of one seaman. None were to be required of any vessel below the burden of thirty-five tons; every vessel above thirty-five and below seventy was to furnish one landsman; every vessel between seventy and one hundred and five tons was to find one seaman or two landsmen; and so on, in proportion, to one hundred and forty; and above that, progressively, one landsman was to be supplied for every fifty tons. The reason assigned for the distinction between large and small vessels, as to the proportion of men they were to be called on to furnish, was, that the smaller ships made many more voyages than the larger ships, and had, therefore, much more frequent occasion for the protection of convoy. The whole number of men expected to be obtained by this plan, was from eighteen to twenty thousand. Mr. Pitt stated it it to be also his intention to call upon the country for some supply of landsmen for the service of the navy; to be raised according to the number of parishes in the kingdom, and reckoning one man for each, it might produce a force of about ten thousand men. Where the parishes failed to supply their men, they were to pay a fine larger than the bounty paid to volunteers. He had it likewise in contemplation to raise a number of men out of those who were employed in the inland navigation, on navigable rivers and canals.

To this quarter Mr. Pitt looked, and certainly not without reason, as a nursery for our seamen; as persons engaged in the inland navigation, from the mode of their education, and the habits of their life, were well qualified for the sea-service. Such was the outline of Mr. Pitt's plan for supplying the navy with men. It was so far a better plan than the one which was pursued in France, before the Revolution, as it did not subject persons, following a sea-faring life, to the necessity of registering their names, and the ships on board which they served, that they might be forthcoming whenever the approach of war might render their services necessary; but it was much more precarious and less efficacious. It was one step, however, towards the attainment of a great national object; and as the immediate adoption of it was not pressed upon the House, sufficient time was allowed for correcting any of its defects, and for supplying any of its deficiencies.

Mr. Pitt, at this moment, merely moved for leave to bring in a bill for carring the plan into effect.—He had recourse, at the same time, to another auxiliary measure, which had been adopted in former wars, for procuring men, by bringing in a bill to enable magistrates to apprehend all idle and disorderly persons, who might be able to serve his Majesty, and who could give no satisfactory account of their means of procuring a subsistence.

A conversation, rather than a debate, ensued on this developement of Mr. Pitt's plan, which was truly represented as a strong measure, which nothing but necessity could justify. No objection, of any consequence, was started;—but Mr. Harrison, whose mind appears to have been so intent on his notable scheme for the taxation of placemen and pensioners, that he could not discuss any subject, however foreign from it, without an effort, at least, to render it applicable, now seriously proposed, that every person holding a place or pension of 300*l.* a year, should provide one seaman, or two landsmen, for the service of the navy;—persons possessing 400*l.* a year, two seamen or three landsmen;—persons holding 500*l.* a year, two seamen or four landsmen;—and for every 100*l.* above 500*l.* to whatever extent of sum, that one man should be added.—Why persons who, it was fair to presume, were only rewarded in proportion to the services which they rendered to the public, should be thus selected, as particular objects of taxation, this wise legislator did not condescend to explain. Nor does he seem to have been aware, even, that the very ground on which the owners of ships were called upon to contribute to the naval service, in this peculiar way, was, the necessity under which their vessels lay for the protection of our naval force;—if Mr. Harrison could have proved, that persons enjoying rewards for public services stood in frequent need of *convoy*, he might have rendered his proposal as relevant and proper, as it was irrelevant, ridiculous and unjust. It would have occurred, to any man of plain common sense, that the effect of adopting Mr. Harrison's proposal, for rendering persons, holding places, liable not only to contributions, in common with their fellow-subjects, but to additional taxes paid by no other description of persons, would be to diminish the amount of their salaries; a measure which could only be justifiable on

the admission that those salaries were too great for the services which they were established to reward. The only just and honourable mode of acting, then, for a legislator, under such circumstances, was to bring the question, immediately, and in a direct way, before the House; when its merits might be fairly discussed;—and if, upon due investigation, it had been found, that the salaries were too high, the House should have addressed the King, and requested him to reduce them to a proper standard. But it was very well known, that such an inquiry would lead to a very different result; and, therefore, this indirect mode of attack, upon persons holding public situations, was preferred as best calculated to answer the purposes of faction, by rendering them odious to the undiscerning multitude; and to prevent the question from being brought before the public, in the only way in which its real merits could be investigated, and the truth made apparent. In respect of pensioners, it was also studiously concealed, that they were already subject to a particular tax of four shillings in the pound, on the amount of their pensions, in addition to all other taxes.*

The Minister having, at length, brought his negotiation with Austria, respecting the means for the vigorous prosecution of the war, to a state of great forwardness, delivered a message to the House, on the fourth of February, from his Majesty, who informed the Commons, that the Emperor was inclined to make the most vigorous exertions for the common cause, in the following campaign; but that, to enable him to carry his plans into effect, it would be necessary for his Imperial Majesty to raise four millions by way of loan, on the credit of his hereditary dominions; and this was proposed to be done, under the guarantee of his Majesty, with the concurrence of Parliament. With

* Nothing can be more absurd than this mode of diminishing the amount of pensions, granted for public services; for, as matters now stand, when a pension list of 20,000*l.* is held forth to the people, they naturally think that the whole amount of that sum is taken out of the public purse; whereas, in fact, only 16,000*l.* is paid. From this practice of granting *nominal* incomes no one advantage is derived, and for it, no one valid reason can be assigned. While it is a deception on the person receiving a pension, it is of no benefit whatever to the public. If the government think a man entitled to a given sum for his services, let him receive that sum, subject only to such taxes as the same income derived from any other source would be subject to;—let him not have 500*l.* a year *nominally*, and only 400*l.* a year in *fact*.

such pecuniary aid, it was stated that the Emperor would be enabled to bring into the field an army of two hundred thousand effective men. The King was of opinion that such an arrangement would prove highly beneficial to the common cause; but he thought that the advantages to be derived from it would be greatly extended, if the Emperor were allowed to raise a still larger sum, and so to employ a more considerable force; and the British Minister, at Vienna, had been instructed to inform the Emperor, that his Majesty was prepared to recommend such an extension to his Parliament.

This message was taken into consideration by the House on the following day, when Mr. Pitt entered into a justification of the measure now recommended to Parliament; in the course of which he took a cursory view of the present state of Europe, and of the various opinions entertained at home, on the subject of peace; whence he inferred the policy and the wisdom of affording every facility to the Emperor,—whether with a view to the successful prosecution of the war, or in contemplation of that state of things which would justify its termination. He finally moved a resolution, expressive of the concurrence of the House in the sentiments expressed by his Majesty; and containing an assurance of their readiness to co-operate with his Majesty, in guaranteeing a still larger loan to the Emperor, should such a step be thought advisable and practicable by that Sovereign; convinced, as they were, that it would be essentially conducive to the immediate interests of his Majesty's subjects, at this conjuncture, and to the great object of re-establishing, on a secure and permanent foundation, the peace and tranquillity of these kingdoms, and of Europe. The motion was opposed by Mr. Fox, but his eloquence was exerted in vain, since it procured only fifty-eight votes to resist the opinions of one hundred and seventy-three.

Some petitions for peace, which are never difficult to obtain, for no arguments are necessary to persuade the multitude, that the fewer taxes there are the more money they will have to spend, having been procured, and laid on the table of the House, Mr. Grey, on the sixth of February, again laboured to persuade the House to adopt an abstract

declaration of the perfect competency of the government at this time existing in France, to entertain and conclude a negotiation for peace with Great Britain. Not one new reason was, or, indeed, could be, adduced, in support of this long-contested point. The Minister had before specifically declared, and he now repeated the declaration, that no sort of government in France would preclude negotiation, if that negotiation could afford a prospect of a secure and permanent peace. Sixty members voted with Mr. Grey; and one hundred and ninety for the previous question. It is as impossible not to admire the unwearied perseverance of the Opposition, in their labours on this subject, as it is to deny, that the only tendency of such repeated motions was to discourage the people of this country, and to give fresh spirits to the French. A few days after this, a similar discussion took place in the House of Peers, on a motion of the Duke of Bedford, the same in import to that of Mr. Grey, but worded with more caution. It was resisted on the same grounds as those on which the resistance to other motions of the same nature had been founded, and twelve Peers only divided in favour of it.

When Mr. Pitt opened the budget, (on the 22d of February,) it appeared, that the aggregate sum, requisite for the service of the year, amounted to 27,540,584*l.* 3*s.* 8¼*d.*; to supply which, an issue of exchequer bills, to the amount of three millions and a half, and a loan of eighteen millions, were requisite. In order to defray the interest of the loan, Mr. Pitt proposed to raise, by an additional duty of twenty pounds per ton upon wine, half a million;—by an additional duty on spirits, of eight-pence on every gallon of rum; of ten-pence on the same quantity of brandy; and of one penny per gallon on British spirits; two hundred and fifty-nine thousand pounds;—by a duty on different articles of customs, such as raisins, oranges, lemons, &c. one hundred and eighty-seven thousand pounds;—by an additional duty on stamps, sixty-eight thousand pounds;—by a restriction of the privilege of franking letters, forty thousand pounds;—by a guinea licence to wear hair-powder, two hundred and ten thousand pounds;—by an additional duty of seven and a half per cent. on tea, and an additional duty on coffee and cocoa, two hundred and twenty thousand pounds;

—by a tax on the insurance of ships and cargoes, and of lives, one hundred and sixty thousand pounds; forming a total of one million six hundred and forty thousand pounds. Mr. Pitt gave a very flattering account of the prosperous state of the revenue and commerce of the country, and entered into some details to prove the truth of his statement. All the resolutions which he proposed were adopted by the House; few objections were made to the different taxes proposed; and the necessary bills for giving them a legal sanction were afterwards brought in, and passed through their various stages, with little opposition. The bill for manning the navy also received the sanction of the Legislature.

The Opposition, highly dissatisfied with the confidence which the House of Commons still reposed in the Minister, omitted no opportunity for endeavouring to convince them of their error; and, in order to open a vast field for animadversion and censure, Mr. Fox, on the 24th of March, made a comprehensive motion for the House to resolve itself itself into a committee for inquiring into the state of the nation. One reason, among many, which he assigned for recommending this inquiry to the House was, the evident change which (from the conduct of Mr. Wilberforce and his friends) he chose to believe had taken place in the minds of the public, respecting the war. Assuming this change as a fact, he plainly told the House, that if they continued to repose a blind and implicit confidence in Ministers, and only shewed themselves desirous of imposing burdens on the people, and of supporting measures which would render new burdens necessary, not only *without driving Ministers into negotiation*,* or even compelling them to account for the millions of money, and oceans of blood, which they had squandered, but even resisting a motion to enquire into the use which they had made of the confidence which they enjoyed; they must give a decided advantage to all the persons in the country who were desirous of spreading the dissatisfaction they felt themselves, and would prove the truth of their assertion, that the House was, in reality, lost to all the functions for which it was designed. He further insisted, that no man could main-

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795, p. 305.

tain that the constitution was good, if the House refused to entertain the inquiry which he proposed. He asserted that the population of the country had not increased, and that it was unable to repair the loss of blood which we had already suffered by the war. Our resources were represented as defective; and our burdens as so heavy as to admit of little increase. Mr. Fox took a comprehensive view of the war; its origin and progress; the conduct of our allies; and the disasters of the late campaign. He then adverted to the affairs of Ireland; to the Catholics of which country, he admitted, he formerly saw great difficulty in giving all which they had a *right* to claim as subjects of the same constitution, namely, equality of civil rights with every other subject.* He ascribed the present vitiated state of Ireland (as he did every other evil) solely to Ministers; praised the conduct of the Lord Lieutenant in promising Catholic emancipation; and denied that any difference existed between the Catholics and Protestants, who, on the contrary, he asserted, were united in resisting the abuses and corruptions of government. He avowed the ultimate object of his motion to be the removal of Ministers from their places, and his only reason for not directly proposing such a measure was, that he thought inquiry should precede dismission.

The statement which had been so confidently made by Mr. Fox, in regard to Ireland, and urged as a ground for instituting the proposed inquiry, was, in Mr. Pitt's opinion, upon every principle of policy, the strongest reason to induce the House to resist it. He expressed great reluctance in urging any thing upon that subject. Independent of the delicacy attending the discussion in the English House of Commons, of points so intimately connected with the internal state of Ireland, and, consequently, more properly cognizable by the Parliament of that kingdom, which had an independent legislature of its own; it was obvious that the greatest caution must be observed in making declarations on such points as those which had been dwelt on by Mr. Fox. It was not denied that there was much reason to regret some

* Mr. Fox knew perfectly well that the Irish Papists *did* possess the same civil rights with their Protestant fellow-subjects; and that their exclusion from certain offices was an act of their own, and not an act of the government.

occurrences which had lately happened in Ireland; but it was boldly, positively, and unequivocally, asserted, by Mr. Pitt, that if those affairs should be fully investigated, it would appear to the House, and to the kingdom, that none of the embarrassments which might happen in that country, could, in any degree, be attributed to his Majesty's servants in this. Thus much justice to himself and his colleagues extorted from Mr. Pitt, who declined to add more than one observation upon this subject—that if it were true that the sister kingdom was in a state of irritation, ferment, and uneasiness, it certainly was the strongest possible reason for not chusing such a moment for instituting the proposed inquiry.

The observations which had been made on the Roman Catholics of Ireland, were truly regarded as telling them, that the bare circumstance of calling those claims in question,—that the delay interposed in granting them to their utmost extent,—that the hesitation to level all those distinctions which had so long been established, and the policy of not being too precipitate in lavishing upon them new privileges in addition to those which they had so lately acquired, were to them matters of serious and intolerable grievance. What was it but to countenance discontent under pretext of lamenting it, and to produce danger by the very means which were recommended as useful for precaution? What was it but proclaiming to our enemies the embarrassment and difficulties under which we laboured at home; a sort of conduct but ill calculated to diminish their hopes of success, or to infuse into them new dispositions to peace. If the House, from the progress of the French arms in Brabant and Holland, and from the views which they discovered of enlarging their territories, in proportion to the extent of their conquests, had been only more deeply impressed with the necessity of vigorous exertion, and manly perseverance, in the contest; would they be likely to adopt a motion which, in the result, could only be productive of humiliation and disappointment? Would they proclaim to the enemy a danger with respect to themselves, which, if not proclaimed, might, in fact, have no existence? Considered in this point of view, there could be no conduct less consistent with sound policy, with the true interests of the empire, or less conducive to the

termination of that great struggle in which the country was engaged, than that proposed by the present motion. Mr. Pitt followed Mr. Fox, in a cursory manner, through the different divisions of his argument, and exposed the fallacy of his statements respecting the revenue and the population of the country.—On the subject of the war, he declined entering into any lengthened detail, as all the subjects connected with it had been so frequently discussed before. He moved the question of adjournment.

The arguments of Mr. Fox were repeated by Mr. Sheridan, with some additional comments on the alleged criminality of Ministers, and the necessity of removing them to make way for men of more abilities and integrity; while, on the other hand, many of these arguments were very ably confuted by Mr. Canning. On Mr. Fox's declaration, on the peculiar defect in the constitution of Great Britain, which was the only country, according to him, in which it would be possible for a Minister to remain in office after such repeated failures and disasters, Mr. Canning observed, that the defect, if so it must be called, grew out of the peculiar freedom of the British constitution, and out of the share which the people took in the public affairs, and the political conduct of the government. In arbitrary governments, where no intercourse subsisted between the executive power and the people, where the latter had no insight into the proceedings of the state, but were left to judge, merely from the event, how far they might have been wisely designed, or honestly conducted, it was not surprising that they should consider every failure as a crime, and demand a victim for every disaster. But, in free and enlightened states, where the people went, as it were, hand in hand with their representatives, and their representatives with the Ministers, through every stage of a proceeding, they certainly did *not* wait for the event before they stamped it with their approbation,—and, certainly did *not* insist upon punishing those who had the conduct of an expedition, while they could assign reasons to themselves in exculpation of a failure. The question of adjournment was carried by two hundred and nineteen votes against sixty-three.

The great questions of the object of the war, and of the expediency

of premature negotiations for peace, had been so repeatedly discussed, under every form, and the opinion of Parliament upon them had been so frequently and so decidedly expressed, that it was difficult to conceive how any possible good could result from a repetition of such discussions. Mr. Wilberforce, however, thought otherwise, and, at the latter end of May (27th,) called upon the House of Commons to record their opinion, that the present circumstances of France ought not to preclude the government of this country from entertaining proposals for a general pacification;—and that it was for the interest of Great Britain to make peace with France, provided it could be effected on *fair* terms, and in an honourable manner.

It was no discredit to the talents of Mr. Wilberforce if he offered nothing new on the subject of his motion,—because every thing that could be said in support of it had already been pressed with all the weight which superior talents could give it. No small part of his speech, indeed, was devoted to general reflections on the impolicy and cruelty of war, and on the preference to be given to peace,—abstract points about which no difference of opinion could possibly arise among Christians. He was answered by Mr. Windham, who, before he entered upon the argument, stated the necessity of knowing with *whom* he was arguing, and *how*; whether it was with any of those who, at the commencement of the war, were convinced of its necessity, and voted for it as the only means of preserving the dignity of the English character, the religion, laws, and liberties, of the nation,—the safety, honour, and security, of the Empire,—and the commerce, morals, and happiness of the people; or, whether he was arguing with one of those who approved the principles and doctrines of the French Revolutionists, who did not wish to overthrow the dangerous system of those extravagant enthusiasts; but, however strange it might appear, though nothing scarcely could be imagined strange in those days of fantastic philosophy, and pretended reformation, who had believed, and who still believed, that the establishment of the French Republic was desirable to mankind. To the latter description of persons, however, Mr. Windham forbore to direct any of his arguments, because he conceived them to be too much intoxicated with intemperance, and so completely blinded by

their zeal, as to be so regardless of reason and fact, that any attempt to convince or to convert them, would prove equally fruitless and absurd. He therefore confined his address solely to those who, like Mr. Wilberforce, had originally approved the war. He then entered into a train of argument, replete with judicious and pointed observations, and marked alike by acuteness and strength. He shewed that the persons whom he addressed had not considered the state of things which would follow the conclusion of peace with France, at such a juncture;—they had taken every thing for granted which suited their wishes; and had indulged themselves in loose and vague speculations, instead of drawing solid inferences from existing facts. Mr. Wilberforce had argued as if he thought that a treaty of peace would operate as by magic, and produce, in a moment, all the accustomed blessings which usually flow from a state of tranquillity. In the wild flights of his imagination, he did not stop to enquire whether accumulated dangers might not arise from our insecurity; nor to consider whether the lure of peace might not be held out by the enemy for the sole purpose of taking advantage of our weakness and credulity, to commit, unpunished, their premeditated acts of cruelty and revenge.

In the mind of Mr. Windham, the motion now made was neither safe nor honourable.—He accused Mr. Wilberforce of being too much addicted to speculations, and of setting up for a kind of constitution-monger—He had lately expressed a wish to give to France the constitution of America.—Mr. Windham, most successfully, ridiculed and exposed the monstrous folly of seeking to transplant constitutions like trees, without any regard to local circumstances, or to any of the causes which favour their growth, and lead them to produce good fruits, as if constitutions could be transported from one country to another, like ready-made moveable habitations, and not as they really are, natural to, and inseparable from, the countries for which they are specifically formed, and growing out of the affections, sentiments, and dispositions, of the people. He then expatiated largely on the present relative state of the belligerent powers, and contended that there was nothing in the view of it which could justify the belief either that peace could be obtained if sought for, or that, if obtained, it would

bring security along with it. He remarked that the person who brought forward the motion was the friend of the Minister, upon whom he had, in the course of that evening, pronounced many eulogiums. He had expressed a firm reliance on his talents, his integrity, and judgment;—he had praised his general capacity, and he esteemed him as the most proper person for conducting the government of the country. Yet, notwithstanding all these admissions, he was not fit to conduct the business of the state, and, therefore, Mr. Wilberforce proposed to conduct it for him. He would not offer to displace his friend, but he would undertake to devise measures for him; and to assume the office of his dictator! In all public affairs men were bound to follow their duty in preference to their friendships; and, Mr. Windham observed, that, for his own part, he had sacrificed friendships that were dear to him, to his public duty, and he did so because he loved to follow right, though it was sometimes difficult to find where it lay. Mr. Wilberforce had done so too, though the mode in which he had done it was such as not to be entitled to approbation, since, in affairs of the first importance, he had followed his own opinions. A Christian conscience was understood to be connected with humility, but Mr. Wilberforce had acted in opposition to those of whose integrity and ability he entertained no doubt, and with whom he was still bound in the close ties of friendship. He was playing a deep game; for if he were not the preserver, he was the undoer, of his country; and if he did not obtain the posthumous fame which he so virtuously desired, he would be transmitted to posterity with eternal execration.* Mr. Wilberforce was admonished to consider how far he conformed himself to the sentiments of those whose thoughts and actions he had been accustomed to oppose, or how far he adopted new opinions of his own. There were two things to confirm a man's judgment—the concurrence of his friends, and the dissent of his enemies. But Mr. Wilberforce had been playing a most unequal game, for he had not only the dissent of his friends, but the approbation of his opponents. He ought also to have considered, that, in every exclusive public concern, but more particularly in a war, and still

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795, p. 345.

more in such a war as was then waging, the executive government were possessed of a knowledge which could not possibly be possessed by others; and therefore he could not have such good grounds for his opinion as the Ministers had for their own.—Mr. Windham moved the order of the day.

On the other hand, Mr. Wilberforce received the thanks of Mr. Fox, who thought the oftener the subject of conciliation and peace was pressed upon the public mind, the better. Mr. Pitt, however, while he gave him credit for the goodness of his motives, expressed his concern at his conduct. He contended that a radical error pervaded his whole argument, which was founded on a deception; for it went directly to the consideration of this simple question—Is a peace, on fair and honourable terms, preferable to a continuance of the war?—A question on which, as had been repeatedly stated no debate could arise, because no possible difference of opinion could subsist. But the real question to be considered was, Whether a peace, on fair and honourable terms, which is the end of all war, was more likely to be attained by negociation, at the present moment, than by a continuance of the war? Were they more likely to arrive at a better and more secure peace, with a reasonable prospect of permanency, by a continuance of the war, with energy and vigour, till a more favourable opening should present itself, than by the immediate adoption of some step for encouraging or inviting a negotiation?—That was the question which put an end, alone, to all the declamations on the advantages of peace, which nobody would deny in this country; where the rapid effects of peace had healed wounds, infinitely greater than any which had been experienced since the commencement of the existing war, in repairing losses, more affecting the prosperity of the country than any recently sustained;—effects which, in the interval of a few years, had made us almost forget the calamities of war.

It was not the least extraordinary part of Mr. Wilberforce's conduct, that he disclaimed all wish of inducing the Ministers to make any advance, to take the first step towards a negotiation; he only professed a desire that they should be ready to *receive* overtures of

peace. But it was well observed by Mr. Pitt, that the adoption of his motion would be to take the first step, and to take it in the most exceptionable manner. That it was not an overture, on our part, to express our wish to treat, where no intimation whatever of the existence of a similar disposition in the government of France had been given, was what no man, in his senses, would maintain. Where the overture came from the Legislature of a country, it was attended with a degree of publicity which Mr. Wilberforce had admitted to be one of the merits of our constitution. But that could not be the most convenient mode of making overtures which made known the whole terms of peace to the enemy, and left no will to Ministers to take advantage of any favourable circumstances which might occur. The Legislature, aware of the disadvantages of such a proceeding, did not usually interfere in transactions, the knowledge of the real state of which was, of necessity, confined to a few; and therefore it was that the constitution had wisely vested all negotiations for peace in the executive government. Why had this country, which was so jealous of its rights and liberties, entrusted such prerogatives to the Crown? Why was the power of making peace and war, and other prerogatives, which formed the excellence and the happiness of the British constitution, entrusted to the King?—Because it had been found, that the power of Parliament was sufficient to prevent the extension of the Royal Prerogative beyond its proper limits. It was, then, for the House to consider, whether they would step forward and assume that power of the Crown at a crisis of peculiar delicacy?

It was one of not the least strange opinions of Mr. Fox, that the French Convention, from the publicity of its proceedings, bore a nearer resemblance to the British Constitution than the constitution of any other country. Mr. Pitt expressed a hope that it was not meant to carry the comparison any farther, as if the interests of this country were to be only discussed in one popular assembly;—he hoped Mr. Fox was not so much in love with France. He thought the idea had been taken up hastily. He was not certain that it was worth while to examine, whether a despotic government, or an anarchial republic, like that of France, most nearly resembled the Constitution of

Great Britain, which was removed, at an equal distance, from both extremes.

A comparative view of the expences and resources of England and France closed Mr. Pitt's observations on the subject. — By this it appeared, that, while Great Britain expended, in the prosecution of the war, not more than twenty-five millions per year, the expence of France amounted to ninety-seven millions per month, or three hundred and twenty-four millions per year. The inference was, that, by the prosecution of the war, we should exhaust her means, and obtain for ourselves a fair prospect of concluding, at no distant period, a safe and honourable peace. The order of the day was carried, and Mr. Wilberforce's motion rejected, by two hundred and one votes to eighty-six. A similar motion was made in the House of Peers, by Lord Lauderdale, on the 5th of June, where it was negatived by fifty-three votes against eight.

The attention of Parliament was occupied, for some time, in discussions respecting the propriety and expediency of raising a loan of four millions to the Emperor, to enable him to act with vigour against the enemy. The Opposition attacked the good faith of his Imperial Majesty, as they did the character of every ally we had; while Mr. Pitt contended, that, under the circumstances in which Europe was actually placed, it was politic, and wise, to embrace every offer of assistance against the common enemy. This opinion ultimately prevailed, and the loan received the sanction of the Legislature.

In the Speech from the Throne, at the opening of the Sessions, a proper provision for the Prince of Wales, on his marriage, was recommended as an object deserving the attention of Parliament. It became, therefore, the duty of Mr. Pitt, as Minister, to propose such a provision; a duty which, had the proposal been confined to this object, he would have had no difficulty to discharge.—But, unfortunately, it happened, that, since the payment of the Prince's debts by Parment, in 1787, his Royal Highness had incurred debts to a very considerable amount, not less than 600,000l.; and it was deemed neces-

sary to provide some means for their liquidation. The difficulty arose from the implied engagement entered into, on the part of the Prince, on the former occasion, to incur no more debts, and, consequently, to make no further application to Parliament on such a subject. The words, in the Royal Message of 1787, containing this engagement, were these;—"His Majesty could not, however, expect, or desire, "the assistance of this House, but on *a well-grounded expectation* that "the Prince will avoid contracting any debts in future."—"And his "Majesty has the satisfaction to inform the House, that *the Prince of* "*Wales has given his Majesty the fullest assurance of his determination* "*to confine his future expences within his income*, and has also *settled a* "*plan* for arranging those expences in the several departments, and "for fixing an order for payment under such regulations as his Majesty "trusts will effectually secure the due execution of the Prince's inten-"tions." That this amounted to an engagement of the nature contended for, will not admit of a doubt; and, indeed, as such it was received, at the time, not only by Parliament, but by the country at large. The only means of evading the natural conclusion to be drawn from this circumstance was, by shewing that the King contracted this engagement without the consent, or knowledge, of the Prince.—But such an evasion seemed impossible to every man in the kingdom. There was one man, however, bold enough to make the attempt. In one of the many debates which occurred on this business, in the course of the present summer, Mr. Sheridan observed, that Alderman Newnham had considered that promise (of 1787) as not binding, because not formally delivered by the Prince himself;—this *he* could not accede to; for if he could be more bound than by a direct promise, it would be by the circumstances which attended the promise, such as it was. Had the Prince acted under a notion that he gave no direct promise, and received the money under an idea that he could quibble away the promise which he did make, he would act in a shameless and profligate manner; he would then appear to have entered into an incomplete engagement with a view to future prevarication.* Mr. Sheridan then declared, that he

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795. Debate of June 5th, p. 499.
In the course of his Speech, Mr. Sheridan stated, that he had formerly been honoured

would state the fact to the House, such as it really was, and leave them to draw their own inference. When it was first suggested, that a promise was to be made, he, Mr. Sheridan, had advised the Prince not to bind himself by any such obligation, without a more full knowledge of the state of his circumstances altogether, and without the assistance of a man of business who could regulate his future expenditure.—An order of payment, and arrangement, had been drawn up, and sent to his Majesty; and the Prince was then informed, from the proper quarter, that such arrangement would be sufficient; and the Prince's friends strongly advised him to abstain from any promise. How then was he astonished to find, in the Message from the Throne, that his Majesty had received the strongest assurances that no future debt would be incurred?—And when he mentioned the circumstance to the Prince, he seemed surprised, and wanted him to go down to the House the next day, and *retract the obligation* which he refused to do.* Without inquiry into the *motives* which induced the advice here acknowledged to have been given to the Prince, it is perfectly clear that his Royal Highness would have acted more consistently in following it, than in reducing himself to the necessity of making any other application to Parliament. It was thus plainly asserted, that the Prince neither knew of the promise contained in the Message of 1787, nor acquiesced in it;—whence it would follow, of course, that the Minister had put a falsehood into the mouth of his Sovereign. To repel so foul an imputation, Mr. Secretary Dundas informed the House, *that his Majesty's Message of* 1787 *was read to the Prince of Wales before it was presented to Parliament.* It was perfectly intelligible; and his Royal Highness had certainly a competent knowledge of the English language to enable him to understand its import.† Hence the fact was indisputably established, that the promise was made with the knowledge and consent of the Prince.

with the confidence of the Prince; but that he was perfectly disinterested, as the *Prince knew that he would not, directly nor indirectly, accept any favours whatsoever.* As wisdom, however, is derived from experience, Mr. Sheridan accepted from the Prince, at a subsequent period, the office of Treasurer to the Duchy of Cornwall, which is understood to produce two thousand pounds a-year; and which he continues to hold at the present moment.

* Woodfall's Reports.—June the 5th, 1795, p. 500.

† Idem, ibid. p. 504.

Under these circumstances, the Minister was reduced to considerable difficulty; he could not, consistently with his character, make a second application to Parliament, for the payment of the Prince's debts; and yet to Parliament he must apply for a suitable provision, for his Royal Highness, on his marriage.—After much consultation on the subject, it was agreed that such a provision should be proposed; but that a given portion of it should be appropriated to the payment of debts. Accordingly, on the 27th of April, a Royal Message was sent to the House, in which his Majesty expressed the deepest regret, in being under the necessity of communicating to the House, that the benefit of any settlement then to be made, could not be effectually secured to the Prince, without providing him with the means of freeing him from incumbrances, to a large amount, to which he was actually liable. His Majesty, however, disclaimed all idea of proposing to Parliament to make any provision for that object, otherwise than by the application of part of the income which might be settled on the Prince; and he earnestly recommended the House to consider of the propriety of thus providing for the gradual discharge of those incumbrances by appropriating and receiving, for a given term, the revenues arising from the Duchy of Cornwall, together with a proportion of the Prince's other annual income; and the King declared his readiness to concur in any provisions, which the wisdom of Parliament might suggest, for the purpose of establishing a regular and punctual order of payment, in the Prince's expenditure, and of guarding against the possibility of the Prince being again involved in so painful and embarrassing a situation.

This application gave rise to many debates, chiefly occasioned by the Prince's debts.—The income proposed by Mr. Pitt to be allowed to the Prince was 125,000l.; an income which, whether considered comparatively with the incomes of former Heirs-Apparent, or positively with regard to the actual price of every article of comfort, and of luxury, was certainly not more than adequate to the support of that splendour and magnificence which it became the Prince to display. This sum, after much discussion, was granted;—some members, however, granting it with a direct view to the existing incumbrances; and

others without any such view. Indeed, no member could, consistently with his duty, after the recent Message from the Throne, and the transaction of 1787, take the debts into his contemplation in settling the amount of the Prince's provision. It ought to have been estimated exclusively, on the consideration of the rank which he had to support, and the unavoidable expence of supporting it. When this point was settled, it was proposed to appropriate 65,000*l.*, in addition to 13,000*l.* the estimated produce of the Duchy of Cornwall, to the gradual liquidation of the debts.—On this proposal, much warm discussion, and great difference of opinion, even between men who usually acted and voted together, took place. Mr. Grey, and several others, considered this as a call upon Parliament to guarantee, to a certain extent, the payment of the Prince's debts, which, after what had passed in 1787, the House could not, with any regard to propriety or justice, consent to do. Mr. Pitt contended, that the sum granted was no more than was necessary to support the Prince in becoming splendour, without any reference to his debts; at the same time he deplored the unfortunate dilemma to which the House was reduced, of either leaving the Prince in a state of embarrassment, or of adopting the proposed expedient for his relief. Mr. Sheridan chose to consider the provision as granted with express reference to the debts, and declared that the public would never believe otherwise.—He thought that the House ought deeply to consider, whether, in a war unexampled for calamity and defeat, when the people were pressed almost to the ground by the heavy accumulation of taxes, they should be further burdened by the prodigality of a Prince;—whether the House, in a spirit of equal profusion, should open the public purse to gratify the cravings and wild waste of thoughtless extravagance.* But while Mr. Sheridan contended that the House ought not to pay the Prince's debts, he insisted that the King ought to pay a portion of them, and was of opinion that the Duchy of Cornwall should be sold to defray the remainder;—although the Prince had only a life-estate in the Duchy;† and of

* Woodfall's Reports.—June the 5th, 1795, p. 495.

† Mr. Sheridan proposed that both the King and Queen should contribute "to gratify the cravings and wild waste of thoughtless extravagance;" and, in order to supply any deficiency that might exist after such contribution, he suggested the notable idea of taxing persons

course, had no more right to sell it than any individual had to sell an entailed estate. Mr. Fox concurred with Mr. Pitt, in the propriety of adopting the expedient proposed for the liquidation of the debts; but, at the same time, he agreed with Mr. Sheridan, that the King should be called upon to pay a part of them.

During the discussion the idea was started, that the Prince had a right to the proceeds of the Duchy of Cornwall during his minority; and this right was boldly asserted and defended by several members. But the Attorney-General distinctly stated, that, from the time of Edward the Third to the present moment, the King had always disposed of the produce of the Duchy, before the Prince came of age, in such manner as to him seemed proper,—and his right so to do had never been contested.

The debates on the question were renewed in every stage of the proceeding;—and the freedom with which the conduct of the Prince of Wales, which came fairly and necessarily under the consideration of the House, was considered, by some of his professed and most officious friends, as a sufficient justification for treating the King with marked disrespect. Mr. Fox, by a strange perversion of terms, and a confusion of intellect which would disgrace a school-boy, called his SOVEREIGN "*The servant of the people.*"* This was a servile imitation of the French Regicides; and a direct encouragement to all the theoretical reveries of the disaffected in England. Mr. Fox had also advanced another opinion, of similar tendency—that the civil list should be granted *annually* by Parliament; thus rendering the Monarch a dependent stipendiary of the House of Commons. Mr. Dundas ably com-

holding sinecure offices;—that is, to diminish the incomes of individuals, who had deserved well of their country, in order to supply "the prodigality of a Prince." He would put instances in support of his proposition—"the place of Teller of the Exchequer," (held by the Marquis of Buckingham,) which produces between 18 and 20,000*l.* a-year; and is thus, indeed, peculiarly circumstanced; and, unhappily for this country, that it is the more productive as the burdens of the people increase; that he is rich in proportion as the people are poor."—Woodfall's Reports for 1795. June the 5th, p. 502.

* Woodfall's Reports, June the 5th, 1795, p. 488.

batted the preposterous doctrine of reducing the King to institute a canvas every year for his income. It was astonishing to look back but a few years, and observe what alterations had taken place.—Formerly, the Kings of England possessed a great landed revenue, which was not only sufficient to support them in all the dignity of their station, but was also sufficient to enable them to do many things which modern policy had deemed prudent to place under the check of the House of Commons. Mr. Dundas truly remarked, that such new doctrines were constantly coming forth, and all tending towards one point; and their frequent appearance gave reasonable ground of alarm.* He asked, with great reason, why the King should be called upon to discharge any of those incumbrances which were contracted, without any power on his part to prevent it. Every shilling which had been voted for an establishment to the Prince, was under his own exclusive management and direction.

The debates, on this question, cannot be read without a feeling of regret, that the members had not sufficient courage to speak their minds freely, and without reserve. Few, indeed, considered the question in a proper point of view.—While it was clear that the income voted was not more than sufficient to support a proper establishment for the Heir Apparent, it was equally clear that, with the incumbrances which he had contracted, he could not possibly support it. Lord Thurlow, Mr. Sheridan, and others, it appeared, had advised the Prince to forego the splendour and magnificence becoming his rank and station, and to lead a life of retirement and seclusion from the world.—But the persons who gave this advice seem never to have considered, that the means of supporting that splendour were not given for the purpose of gratifying the personal feelings of the Prince, but for maintaining the character and dignity of the nation. † The advice, therefore, went directly to defeat the very object for which the provision was granted. There was, indeed, only a choice of difficulties; but, without entering into a consideration of the preference of one difficulty over another, it may be safely asserted, that the only consistent mode of acting for the House, was to leave the annual produce of the Duchy

*Woodfall's Reports, June the 5th, 1795, p. 504. † See Vol. I. Chap. XII. 1789.

of Cornwall to be assigned towards the payment of the debts, and so to tie up the 125,000*l.* agreed to be necessary for the Prince's establishment, that no portion of it could be appropriated to any other purpose. By this means, the House would have discharged their duty, by providing for the support of that splendour which the national character required,—the only proper object of consideration to them,—without taking any cognizance of the debts, which, after what had passed in 1787, they were bound to disregard.

A different mode of proceeding, however, was adopted.—The House, though they disclaimed all intention of subjecting the country to any new burdens for the discharge of the Prince's debts, consented so far to guarantee them, as to provide for their payment in the event of the Prince's demise before the expiration of the period (nine years) assigned for their extinction, according to the course of payment now established.—Sixty-five thousand pounds of the annual income, with thirteen thousand pounds from the receipts of the Duchy of Cornwall, making 706,000*l.* in the whole, were set apart for this purpose.—And the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Master of the Rolls, the Master of the King's Household, and the Surveyor of the Crown-Lands, were appointed Commissioners for examining into the nature of the claims on the Prince, and for regulating the discharge of the same. The bills necessary for enforcing these regulations were, after repeated discussions, passed into laws.—The dower assigned to the Princess of Wales was 50,000*l.* a year.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Harmony in the Cabinet—Appointment of Earl Fitzwilliam to the Viceroyalty of Ireland—He dismisses many faithful servants of the Crown—Motives for such conduct assigned—His character of Mr. Beresford proved to be unjust—His hasty decisions not warranted by personal knowledge—Opposite character of Mr. Beresford by Marquis Townshend, the Marquis of Buckingham, the Earl of Westmoreland, and Lord Auckland—Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan become the chosen advisers of the Lord Lieutenant—Impropriety of such choice—Lord Fitzwilliam intends to *emancipate* the Catholics—Measures adopted for that purpose—Mr. Grattan obtains leave, from the Irish House of Commons, to bring in a bill for relieving the Catholics from all remaining restrictions—Precipitate conduct of the Lord Lieutenant—The British Cabinet disapprove it—He refuses to alter it, and is recalled—Bill of relief brought in by Mr. Grattan—Rejected by a great Majority—An Irish member proposes to impeach Mr. Pitt—Inquiry into the cause of Lord Fitzwilliam's recall moved for, in the House of Lords, by the Duke of Norfolk—Lord Westmoreland's speech—He justifies the Government of Ireland from the aspersions cast upon it by Lord Fitzwilliam—Proves tranquillity and confidence to have existed, in an unusual degree, when his Lordship was appointed Viceroy—Vindicates the characters of the persons whom he dismissed from office—Condemns the proposed emancipation of the Papists, as dangerous to the Constitution, and incompatible with the Coronation-oath—Affirms that the instructions which he had himself received from Mr. Pitt, held out no expectations of such a measure—Lord Fitzwilliam's reply—His eulogy on Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan—His character of the latter proved to be most woefully deficient in accuracy—Ridicules all fears of Catholic Emancipation—Misunderstands the question—Just ground of apprehension established by the conduct of the Irish Parliament after the Revolution—Guarded conduct of Ministers during this discussion—Generous declaration of Earl Spencer—Mr. Jekyll moves the same question in the House of Commons—Justifies Lord Fitzwilliam, and censures the Ministers—Differs from his Lordship as to the motive of his recall—Mr. Pitt's speech—He opposes the Inquiry as unnecessary, no charge having been preferred against the late Viceroy—Mr. Douglas notices the wise and beneficent measures of Lord Westmoreland's Government—The motion for an Inquiry negatived in both Houses—Reflections on the short Administration of Lord Fitzwilliam—Alleged grounds for his dismission of the Officers of the Crown examined and proved to be untenable—Sentiments imputed to Mr. Pitt shewn, by his own Letter, never to have been entertained by him—Honourable conduct of the Duke of Portland, and the other Whigs who had joined the Ministers—Mr. Barham's motion respecting the alleged misconduct of Sir Charles Grey and Sir John Jervis—Proclamation issued by those officers oppressive and unjustifiable—Mr. Manning seconds the motion—Reads Letters, accusing the British Commanders of avarice

and inhumanity—Opposed by Mr. Grey—Validity of his reasons—Mr. Dundas's speech—Moves the previous question, and proposes two resolutions, implying approbation of the condemned Proclamation, and of the conduct of the two Commanders—These resolutions censured—Adopted by the House—The vote of Thanks opposed only by Mr. Rose, Junr.—Acquittal of Mr. Hastings—Length of his Trial the source of oppression—Reflections thereon—Alterations suggested in the conduct of Impeachments—High character of Mr. Hastings—Continental Affairs—Poland—Tyrannical conduct of the Russian Empress—Kosciusko—The King of Prussia makes peace with France—Lays siege to Warsaw—Is compelled to retreat—Irruption of the Russians, under Suwarrow, into Poland—Defeat of the Polish Patriots—Kosciusko taken prisoner—Assault on the Capital—The suburb of Prague taken by storm—Warsaw surrenders—Dissolution of the Polish Monarchy—Dismemberment of the Kingdom—Reflections on the unprincipled ambition of the partitioning powers—France makes peace with Spain at Basil—Acquires the Spanish part of St. Domingo—Concludes a Treaty with the Leaders of the Vendeans and Chouans—Never intended to be observed by the French Government—Disastrous expedition to Quiberon—The Emigrants defeated—Many of them taken and executed, in breach of the capitulation—Operations on the Rhine—Internal affairs of France—Efforts of the Terrorists—Insurrections in the Capital—Death of Louis XVII.—Liberation of the Princess Royal—The new Constitution—Its merits and defects—Suppression of all popular Societies—New definition of Equality—Its absurdity shewn—Decrees for compelling the people to re-elect two-thirds of the Convention annexed to the new Constitution—Resisted by the Parisians—Battle of the 5th of October—The Conventional Troops headed by Buonaparte—The Sections of Paris by General Danican—The Parisians vanquished—Fresh efforts of the Terrorists in the Convention—Defeated by the moderate party—Convention dissolved—Naval operations of Great Britain—Gallant conduct of Admiral Cornwallis—Admiral Hotham defeats the French in the Mediterranean—Victory gained by Lord Bridport off Port L'Orient—Capture of the Cape of Good Hope.

[1795.] Notwithstanding the secret whispers, and open insinuations, of the Opposition, tending to convey the impression, that great disagreement had existed in the Cabinet, since their late leaders had consented to become members of it, it is certain that, hitherto, a perfect agreement had prevailed respecting the great measures of policy which it was deemed proper to adopt, at this critical period of public affairs, and that there had been the most cordial and zealous co-operation amongst them for promoting the general interests, and the internal security, of the country. That a difference of opinion might, and did, exist on particular topics, is most certain; but that difference did not relate to any subject which it was necessary to bring into discussion, or to any measure which the welfare of the state required to be carried into effect. Respecting the war, its principle, and its object, the per-

sonal friends, and political connections, of Mr. Burke, concurred in opinion with that statesman, that the restoration of the ancient Monarchy of France was its legitimate end, which ought to be openly avowed, and steadily pursued. Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, considered the restoration of the Monarchy not as the *end* of the war, but as the *means* of promoting its real end—the conclusion of an honourable, secure, and permanent peace.—This difference in principle, however, led to no difference in conduct; for while both parties were agreed on one point,—that no such peace could be concluded at present,—they both concurred in the necessity of a most vigorous prosecution of the war. Both parties, too, had viewed, with the same jealous apprehension, the progress of disaffection in this country; and, therefore, they both zealously supported those strong measures which were judged requisite to counteract it. Hence, in all the leading objects of external and internal policy, that concurrence subsisted which imparts energy to government, and gives effect to its acts.

This harmony, at all times so desirable, and never more so than at the present conjuncture, when success had increased the confidence of our foreign enemy, and the late acquittals had inspired domestic traitors with fresh hopes, experienced some interruption in the spring of the present year, at the beginning of which Earl Fitzwilliam had been sent, as Viceroy, to Ireland. It has been shewn, that, at the period of the Regency, and immediately after the King's providential recovery, there was a party, in Ireland, who signed a *round robin** declaratory of their resolution to resign their offices, in the event of the dismission of any one of them. This party having refused to hold communication

* The deed so termed was drawn up on parchment, and the parties who signed it were said, at the time, to have confirmed the obligation, which they contracted, by an oath.—Strange to say, this disgraceful business, which is without a parallel in the history of modern factions, was transacted at the house of one who enjoyed the offices of Provost and Secretary of State, and who had been raised, from a low situation in life, to political honour and distinction by the favour of the Crown. Such instances of ingratitude should be recorded, as *beacons* to warn public characters, and political partisans, that, however a present object may be obtained by the sacrifice of principle, and by a violation of that integrity which constitutes the only surety which they can give for the discharge of their public duty, they cannot escape the scrutinizing eye of history, nor elude the honest judgment of posterity.

with the King's representative, though they continued to retain situations under the government, were, most properly, dismissed by the Marquis of Buckingham. At the head of the party was Mr. Ponsonby, who, with his numerous friends, immediately joined the Opposition, and opposed all the measures of the government, evidently for no other reason than that they were not in office themselves. Hence arose that spirit of discontent, and that increasing confidence among the Papists, which afterwards gave such serious alarm to the Ministers. No sooner had Lord Fitzwilliam arrived in Ireland, than he called about him the members of this very party, and dismissed many of the most faithful, and most able, servants of the Crown.—Among these was Mr. Beresford, a gentleman of an ancient family, and who had held the situation of Chief Commissioner of Revenue for five-and-twenty years, the duties of which he discharged to the entire satisfaction of every Viceroy who had governed Ireland during that period. The persons selected for this mark of the Vice-regal displeasure were eminently distinguished for their attachment to the Protestant religion, and for their earnest desire to cement the union between the two countries. Had not Lord Fitzwilliam published his reasons for this conduct, it would not have been easy to conjecture what they were. In his published letters, speaking of Mr. Beresford, he said: "He filled a situation greater than that of the Lord Lieutenant; and when he saw that, if he had connected himself with him, it would have been connecting himself with a person under universal heavy suspicions, and subjecting his government to all the opprobrium and unpopularity attendant upon his maladministration, what was then to be his choice? What the decision he had to form? He could not hesitate a moment;—he decided, at once, not to cloud the dawn of his administration by leaving in such power and authority so much imputed malversation." That a man of Lord Fitzwilliam's character, holding the rank and station which he enjoyed, and honoured with the confidence of his Sovereign, should have ventured to make these, and other, assertions, which he advanced in justification of his conduct, is a lamentable proof of the influence which party-spirit, and disappointed ambition, will sometimes acquire over the most honourable minds. Had this imputed malversation of an old servant of the public really existed, it was scarcely possible for the Viceroy,

without that intuitive sagacity which discovers a man's principles and conduct in his countenance, to obtain any proofs of it, before he formed his opinion, and adopted his decision.—For Lord Fitzwilliam reached Dublin on the Sunday, and, by the Wednesday following, he had resolved to dismiss Mr. Beresford. But it is the duty of the historian to correct the misrepresentations of party; and, unfortunately for Lord Fitzwilliam's statement, it stands contradicted by the concurring testimony of four noblemen, three of whom had served the office of Lord-Lieutenant,—Marquis Townshend, the Marquis of Buckingham, and the Earl of Westmoreland,—and the fourth, Lord Auckland, had been Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant;—all of whom unanimously declared, that a man of more spotless integrity, a more upright, faithful, and able servant of the public, and a more zealous and loyal subject, did not exist.* The fact appears to be this,—that Lord Fitzwilliam having resolved to pursue a different system of policy from that pursued by his predecessors, thought the usual advisers of the government very unfit counsellors for him; he, therefore, called to his councils Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan, the very men who had grossly insulted their Sovereign, in the person of his representative, in 1789; and who had formed a faction which had systematically opposed every measure of the government; and from these advisers, no doubt, the Viceroy received the character of Mr. Beresford, and of other respectable gentlemen, whom he chose to dismiss from their official situations.

It was clearly Lord Fitzwilliam's fixed determination to release the Papists of Ireland from every restriction to which they still remained subject, and to place them on precisely the same footing, with regard to political rights and privileges, with the members of the established church. Without waiting to know how far a plan, so fraught with the most serious consequences to the peace, welfare, and security of the country, was conformable with the views of the British Cabinet;—he authothorized his confidential adviser, Mr. Grattan, to move, three weeks after the meeting of Parliament, for leave to bring in a bill for that purpose. Had Lord Fitzwilliam's impatience allowed him to wait

* See the Speeches of these noblemen, in the debate on the recall of Earl Fitzwilliam.—Woodfall's Reports, Vol. III. p. 150—190.

only two days longer, he would have been spared the mortification, and his country the inconvenience, which resulted from his unwise and precipitate conduct.—For so soon did he receive the opinion of the British Cabinet, in disapprobation of the measure.—He did not chuse, however, to stop short in his career; but, continuing to oppose his own sentiments to those of the Cabinet, he was, most properly, recalled, and Earl Camden was appointed to succeed him. The obnoxious bill was afterwards brought in by Mr. Grattan, but was rejected by a great majority.—One of the party, a Mr. Duguerry, seriously proposed to impeach Mr. Pitt!

By this recall, Earl Fitzwilliam chose to consider himself as disgraced; and determined to promote, if possible, a Parliamentary investigation of the business. He must have known, however, that, whatever communications he might deem himself at liberty to make, the Cabinet Ministers were bound to secrecy, as well by a sense of duty to the public, as by the solemn obligation of an oath. They could not, therefore, defend themselves against misrepresentation, by divulging the whole of the proceedings of the Cabinet, and without that their defence could not be complete. In the debate, which took place on the subject, in the House of Lords, on the motion for an inquiry, by the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Westmoreland entered into an analysis of the reasons alleged by Lord Fitzwilliam, in justification of his conduct. Indeed, as Lord Westmoreland had preceded him in the government of Ireland, it became necessary for him to disprove his assertions, respecting the state of oppression and corruption which he had stated to exist in that country when he arrived there. He maintained that as much purity prevailed in Ireland as in the government of any other country; and that no means were neglected which could contribute to the comfort and happiness of the people; and that so far from the prevalence of that universal discontent which Lord Fitzwilliam had so confidently stated to exist,—an universal degree of unanimity, confidence, and tranquillity, prevailed. His lordship successfully ridiculed the inference drawn, by the recalled Viceroy and his friends, from the liberal grants of the Irish Parliament, which were asserted to have been voted in contemplation of the proposed

measure; as if a Protestant Parliament would vote unusual supplies for the purpose of Catholic Emancipation! He vindicated the persons whom Lord Fitzwilliam had dismissed from office. In respect of Mr. Beresford, whom Lord Fitzwilliam disclaimed all intention of injuring, conceiving that he had made him ample amends by a proposed pecuniary compensation, it was justly observed that, if he deserved the character which the Viceroy had given him in his public letter, he merited punishment and not reward; and if he did not deserve it,—and no man in the kingdom deserved it less,—the pretence of atoning for the disgrace by money, was equally offensive and absurd.* In either case the Viceroy did not discharge his duty. Lord Fitzgibbon, the Chancellor of Ireland, who had also fallen under the displeasure of the Viceroy, was truly described to be a nobleman of incorruptible integrity, who had remained true to the government at a time when Ministers were almost wholly deserted, who had, on all occasions, manifested a sincere solicitude for the unity of the Crown; and proved himself a sound lawyer, an upright judge, and a faithful counsellor.—The Attorney and Solicitor-General, who had shared in the disgrace of the Chancellor, were spoken of in the highest terms, by Lord Westmoreland, who strongly censured, also, the dismission of Mr. Hamilton, *fifty years* of whose life had been spent in the service of the public!

In short, Lord Westmoreland, whose testimony was the more to be relied on, as he spoke from personal knowledge and observation, clearly proved the inaccuracy of Lord Fitzwilliam's representations on the state of the country, and that there was nothing in it which afforded the smallest justification for his conduct. The Catholics had received

* If a lucrative situation had been offered to Lord Fitzwilliam, by his Majesty's Ministers, (who certainly meant to do him no injury, to impute to him no malversation,) by way of compensation or atonement, for his recall, it is perfectly clear that his Lordship would have rejected it with indignation and scorn. With what propriety, then, could he offer to another that which he would reject himself. The first commissioner of the revenue was a man of a noble and ancient family, and had, no doubt, feelings as acute, and a sense of honour as lofty, as the Viceroy himself.—Besides, the Golden rule of conduct,—"To do unto others as we would that others should do unto us,"—is one from the observance of which the Monarch on his Throne is no more exempted than the Peasant in his Cottage.

as many concessions as could, with prudence, be granted; they were treated with kindness,—they were contented with what they had obtained,—and did not ask for more at present.* His lordship made some judicious remarks on the intended abolition of distinctions in Ireland, by the proposed indulgencies to the Papists. He adverted to the Act of Settlement, by which any Prince in this country, who acknowledges the supremacy of the See of Rome, and holds communion with the Pope, does, *ipso facto*, immediately forfeit his inheritance of the Crown; and from the acts of supremacy and uniformity he inferred, that the emancipation of the Papists would be construed into a holding of communion with the See of Rome. By the articles of the Union, too, the King was bound to maintain the Protestant establishment, and that was not a time to trifle with the ecclesiastical establishments of our ancestors. It was further contended, that the King could not, without a direct violation of his coronation oath, give his sanction to such an act. James the Second, it was well observed, had adopted a policy similar to that which had been lately proposed, and the consequences were well known. Why might not similar causes produce similar effects?

The proscription and persecution which the Papists had been stated, in the printed letter, to have sustained since 1793, were most positively denied, as well as the hopes and expectations which were said to have been excited in their minds. Lord Westmoreland declared, that he had received no instructions, obedience to which could produce any such effect; but he had been directed to state, that the government, which was to succeed him, would be a continuance of the King's administration, whereby all jealousies and distinctions were disclaimed, and parties put entirely out of the question. Nothing, he said, could be more fair or honourable, nor could any thing else be expected of Mr. Pitt, to whose sincerity, steadiness of attachment, and strict honour, his lordship bore ample testimony.

The reply of Lord Fitzwilliam consisted of a most unqualified panegyric of his friends, Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan, and of his own

* Woodfall's Reports for 1795, May the 8th, P. 167.

administration. His praises, indeed, of the former of these gentlemen, were so boundless and unguarded, as almost to bear the appearance of irony. A man more universally beloved, and more deservedly so, than Mr. Grattan, he boldly affirmed, there did not exist in Ireland; and it was the peculiar fortune of that gentleman, that *his unalterable attachment to English connection** (displayed, no doubt, in his conduct on the regency, as afterwards in his countenance of the United Irishmen, in 1798;) his unremitting pursuit of the happiness

* So strongly do the veil of prejudice, and the mist of passion, obscure the mental sight, that it is impossible for any person, not labouring under such inconvenience, to contemplate the political life of Mr. Grattan, without drawing inferences directly the reverse of those which were here drawn by Lord Fitzwilliam. Mr. Grattan's principles of reform went directly to procure the *separation* of the two countries.—His conduct, in the business of the Regency, had the same tendency; for he and his party, by prevailing on the Irish Parliament to elect a Regent for Ireland, notwithstanding the unrepealed Irish law, (says a contemporary writer, who was perfectly conversant with the politics of Ireland, and with the real state of the country,)—" that whoever was King or Regent of England, was, *ipso facto*, King or Regent of Ireland," presented to the British Parliament the mortifying and dangerous alternative of nominating the pretended Regent of the Irish Crown Regent of the Imperial Crown of Great Britain, (and thereby, in fact, surrendering to the Irish Houses of Parliament the right of nominating a Regent of England); or of compelling obedience, in Ireland, to the person to be nominated Regent by the Parliament of Britain, by a British army, and a civil war, as England was under the necessity of doing to quell the usurpation of James the Second, in Ireland, after he had abdicated the Crown of England; thus cutting asunder, as far as in him lay, the only bond which bound the two countries together, and laying deep the foundation of future contention, slaughter, and civil war;—for those who have assumed the right of nominating a Regent, will, on failure of issue in the Royal line, and on other contingencies, assume the right of nominating a King, or of changing the Monarchical government into a Republican; and a difference of opinion on such great Imperial questions between the two nations will be the certain parent of civil war, and, perhaps, of mutual destruction." Mr. Grattan's conduct, after Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, was remarkable for any thing but " ardent loyalty to his Sovereign."—It was not the conduct of a disappointed patriot, but that of a furious demagogue, rendered bold by the loss of place and power, or rather emancipated from the shackles which place and power had imposed, and restored to the full liberty of giving vent to the genuine sentiments of his mind. He exerted every effort to excite discontent, and to foment disturbance, by the most inflammatory harangues. In his answer to the address of a Popish Assembly, in Dublin, he plainly declared:—" My wish is, that you should be *free now*; there is no other policy which is not *low* and *little*; let us, at once, instantly *embrace*, and *greatly emancipate*." In short, there were as much inconsistency, contradiction, and tergiversation, in the public conduct of Mr. Grattan, as in that of any other popular demagogue of the day.

of Ireland; his *disinterested* zeal in the service of his native land, (manifested in his acceptance of fifty-thousand pounds as a reward for it,) which he ever combined with *ardent loyalty to the Sovereign*, were exalted, and made more conspicuously useful, by the unrivalled talents of his mind.* His Lordship justified his dismission of the different officers of the Crown, on the ground that they did not enjoy his confidence, without, however, alleging any reason, or fact, to prove them undeserving of it.—But he did not apply his answer, or his reasoning, to any of the strong facts which had been urged by Lord Westmoreland. He treated the important subject of Catholic Emancipation with the utmost levity, and ridiculed the idea of the state being endangered by the discipline of the Church, transubstantiation, the form of kneeling, or sitting, or standing, to take the Lord's Supper.—No, no! exclaimed the Peer, these alarms are gone by, and it is, at this day, felt that there can be no danger to the state, but from political doctrines!—If his Lordship had ever read the history of the Revolution of 1688, he must have known, that the mere rites and ceremonies of the church of Rome had never formed a ground of objection to the admission of Papists to places of trust and power in the State;—and he must have known, also, that the religious tenets of that church were essentially blended with political doctrines, highly dangerous to a Protestant State.† The dangers to be apprehended from the ascendancy of Papists, in such a state, are not subjects of speculative reasoning, but matters of historical fact. The proceedings of the Irish Parliament, subsequent to the Revolution, when it was almost wholly composed of Papists, in repealing the very law by which the estates of Protestants were secured, afford a melancholy

* Woodfall's Reports, ubi supra, p. 170.

† "Is it," asks the same intelligent writer, whose opinion was quoted in a former note, "consistent with the rules of either reason or civil policy, to make legislators of those who make it an article of their faith that the supreme Legislature of the State (whether monarchical or republican, it matters not) is not competent to bind them by its laws in all cases? And that they are, in conscience, bound to so active a disobedience to the laws of their country, enacted by the Legislature of it, in many instances, not only of a spiritual, but a temporal nature, as to endeavour, with all their might, to obstruct and defeat the execution of them? And are such persons to be entrusted with the execution of those laws? No person, of common sense, will answer these questions in the affirmative."

instance of the use which they are disposed to make of power, when once in possession of it.

The Ministers, in both Houses, confined themselves, in the examination of the question, to the simple grounds of justice and policy. They refused to enter at all into the particulars of the correspondence which had taken place between themselves and the Viceroy;—they declared, explicitly, that no blame was imputable to any of the Cabinet Ministers;* and disclaimed all intention of preferring any charge against Lord Fitzwilliam. The King had exercised his prerogative, legally and constitutionally; and Parliament were not justified, either by precedent, or by the peculiar circumstances of the case itself, in interfering in the business. The motions for the inquiry were made, as usual, the vehicles of abuse against the Ministry, and the seceders from the Opposition were exultingly told of the degradation which, it had been predicted, they must suffer, by a coalition with men, whose conduct was marked by duplicity, baseness, and profligacy; and who would sow discord, distrust, and animosity, among them.† Lord Spencer, however, with that manliness of conduct which is the sure token of a truly noble and generous mind, (and no man ever displayed a more marked superiority to every thing low, little, mean, or dishonourable, than this virtuous nobleman,) repelled the foul insinuations, and calumnious assertions, by an explicit declaration, that, ever since his entrance into office, so far from his having reason to complain of his treatment from Ministers, he had, on all occasions, experienced the most uniform, cordial, and honourable support from his colleagues in administration.‡

In the House of Commons, the business was brought forward by Mr. Jekyll, on the 19th of May, on which occasion he solemnly professed that the public, he had always thought, had an interest in watching over the characters of public men, and in vindicating them

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, May 8th, 1795, p. 175.

† See the speeches of Messrs. Jekyll, Fox, and Grey, on the 19th of May, in Woodfall's Reports.

‡ Woodfall's Reports, p. 188.

from insinuated abuse, and unjust aspersion. Public character he regarded as public property, ever to be held sacred till it had been openly forfeited. Yet he did not scruple to indulge himself, at the expence of the first public characters in the kingdom, with a profusion of insinuated abuse and unjust aspersions;—and to launch out into a strain of personal invective, alike indecorous and irrelevant. But while Lord Fitzwilliam himself admitted his conduct respecting the Catholic question to have been the real cause of his recall, his officious advocate, in the House of Commons, treated this admission with contempt, and boldly stated the Catholic question to be a mere stalking-horse, assumed by Ministers for the convenience of the occasion.* A variety of other loose assertions, equally at variance with fact, were advanced, in the same quarter, during this discussion. The Catholic question was considered as a matter of trivial importance, and a confusion was made of *natural* and *political* rights, which would have disgraced the intellects of a political infant. An awkward compliment was paid, by Mr. Fox, to the recalled Viceroy, whom forgetting, no doubt, in the heat of debate, that he was the representative of a Protestant King, he averred to be the only person who had obtained the applauses of all the Catholics and Dissenters in Ireland.†

It was observed by Mr. Pitt, in adverting to the motion for enquiry, that, whatever the view of it might be, whether it was justice to Lord Fitzwilliam, or injustice to the executive government; whether it was the welfare of the British empire at large, or the benefit of the Irish nation exclusively—or whether it was meant to discuss and take the opinion of the House on topics, depending before the independent legislature of the sister-kingdom; it was impossible to enter upon it at all with any effect, but by going into a complete investigation of the whole subject, without suffering themselves to be led away by garbled extracts, and vague rumours, which, however

* Woodfall's Reports, May 19th, 1795, p. 276.

† Idem, ibid. p. 287. Mr. Fox might have boasted, with equal truth, that he, himself, was *almost* the only person who had obtained the applauses of all the Sectaries and Republicans in England; but whether this would have been considered as a merit by the friends of the established constitution, in Church and State, seems to admit of very little doubt.

industriously circulated, certainly were not sufficient grounds for the House to form a decision upon. And whether they would agree to take a step, at once so indelicate and dangerous, as to open the secret transactions of government, and touch the vital parts of the British empire, by unnecessarily probing every little unimportant wound to the bottom, was a question which he would not insult their patriotism, or their wisdom, by doubting.

The alleged necessity of justifying Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Pitt contended, moved on a mere groundless assumption, that his recall, from the government of Ireland, implied a charge against him. But though Mr. Jekyll had insisted, that the removal of the servants of the Crown, from their places, implied a charge, Mr. Fox, who supported him, had not contended for any such principle; and indeed, if such were really the case, there would be an end to the position generally admitted, that the safety of the realm depended on the constitutional right of the Crown to nominate and dismiss its servants at pleasure, and there would be a necessity to inquire into the cause of every dismission. Mr. Fox could not fail to see how very prolific a field of inquiry would then be opened. Mr. Jekyll had adverted to the dismission of Lord Hood; but he would be able to form a judgement of the expediency of such inquiries, and to decide more justly upon that right, when he recollected that the gallant Lord Rodney, in the most interesting and critical period of a very ruinous and exhausting war, and in the very moment of victory, was recalled by the Minister of that day (Mr. Fox himself), without any cause assigned; and when an inquiry was called for, Mr. Fox himself resisted it; nay more, while he professed that he had himself advised his recall, he moved the thanks of the House to the noble Admiral. If, then, in such very extraordinary circumstances, an admiral, who was a solitary instance of successful valour, in a most calamitous war, was recalled by the very minister who moved the thanks of the House to him, was it possible to say, that any stigma could attach to dismission without inquiry? And, with the utmost respect for Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Pitt conceived that there was nothing in the case of a Lord Lieutenant being dismissed, more than in the case of the dismission of a military officer, or any other servant of the

Crown.—Besides, he put it to the reflection of the House to determine, whether there might not be a cause for removal without a crime? Might there not exist a difference of opinion, on some case of transcendant importance, though the parties differing retained the most cordial affection for, and good opinion of, each other?

As much had been said of the corruption and oppression of the Irish Government, previous to the Viceroyalty of Lord Fitzwilliam; as both the Earl himself and his advocates, in both Houses, had made these the principal grounds of his Lordship's justification; and as the Viceroy, in his own speech, had boasted of making every abuse, and every danger disappear in a moment; and of having converted, as it were, by magic, chaos into order, and danger into security,* which was the grossest libel that could be uttered on all the Viceroys who had preceded him, it was deemed necessary, by Mr. Douglas, who had held a public situation in Ireland, to undeceive the House and the public. During the government of Lord Westmoreland, who immediately preceded Lord Fitzwilliam, a variety of measures were adopted, which were calculated not only to gratify the feelings, but to support the interests, of the people of Ireland. His Lordship had exercised the most rigid impartiality in the selection of persons to fill legal situations, in order to procure a due and rigid administration of justice. He had laboured to promote the independence of the legislative body, by the introduction of a bill to disqualify persons holding various offices from sitting in Parliament; and even in cases to which the disqualification was not extended, the acceptance of a place vacated the seat, and the member was sent back to his constituents to receive their judgment upon his conduct. The next grand object attained, during the Viceroyalty

* "I touched the string, and it breathed harmony; it was not a doctrine of differences, but an animation to resist and repel the enemy, if the French had dared to attempt a landing; that enemy that came armed with fire and sword, and with principles still more poisonous and destructive than either." Lord Fitzwilliam did not appear to be aware, that his general argument justified every thing which had been asserted of the disaffection of the great body of the Papists; for it tended to prove, that they had no sense of their duty as subjects, and could only be brought to resist the enemies of the country, and to pay due allegiance to their Sovereign, by promises and bribes,—by removing every obstacle to their full possession of political power!

of Lord Westmoreland, was the establishment of a responsible Treasury-board, in lieu of the sinecure offices of Lord High Treasurer and Vice-Treasurer. That constitutional force, the militia, too, had been established by his Lordship. Hence, it was evident that the object of that administration was the reform of abuses, and not the continuance of error.—The motion for an inquiry was negatived by great majorities in both Houses.

It appears certain, from a close attention to all the known circumstances of this transaction, that Lord Fitzwilliam had laboured under some gross misconception of the views and intentions of the Cabinet. He must have misunderstood some conversation which had passed on the affairs of Ireland; for it is impossible, otherwise, that a nobleman of his honourable mind, the integrity of which no one ever attempted to question, could have pursued that line of conduct which he began to adopt almost immediately after his arrival in Ireland. Still he thought it necessary to write for further instructions from Ministers; his letter was written on the 27th of January; but not having received an answer so soon as he expected, he chose to consider their silence as an assent to his proposed measures, and to have the bill, for the relief of the Catholics, brought forward on the 12th of February. This precipitation, on a matter of such vast importance, was highly censurable;—it was unbecoming a statesman to draw such hasty inferences as he drew, and to act on conjecture when certainty was within his reach. On the 14th of February, he received the marked disapprobation of Ministers;—it was perfectly clear, therefore, first, that he had misunderstood them, for they never could have changed their views and designs in the short period which had elapsed since his departure from England; and if they had sanctioned his new system of policy, at that time, they would not have condemned it so soon after; and, secondly, that his Lordship did not consider his instructions as conclusive, or himself as at liberty to pursue his own plan without further communications with the Ministers.—It would be unjust to admit the supposition, if it were not fairly deducible from his own acknowledgements, that he had purposely advanced with the Papists too far to recede,—as he thought,—with safety;—for, in his reply to

Ministers, he talked of the danger that would infallibly result from retracting the assent so formally given (by himself) to a motion of that importance; and he positively refused, by taking upon him that office, to be the person to *raise a flame which nothing but the force of arms could keep down.*—Now, as Lord Westmoreland had left the country tranquil and contented, this irritation in the public mind must have been wholly occasioned by the imprudent conduct of his successor, which had such a necessary tendency to produce it, as almost to sanction the belief that it was adopted for the purpose. In another respect his Lordship's conduct was highly reprehensible. In a very few days after his arrival in Dublin, he dismissed the principal law officers of the Crown, and some others, all men of approved talents, integrity, and fidelity. Among these were Lord Fitzgibbon, Mr. Beresford, Mr. Wolfe, Mr. Toler, and Mr. Hamilton. The dismission of these trusty servants of the Crown was attempted to be justified, by the assertion that they possessed not the confidence of the Viceroy; and as he meant to pursue a new system of policy, it was necessary he should have the assistance of men of sentiments congenial with his own; and it was further asserted, with a confidence truly astonishing, that it was a change wished for by the people of Ireland, and which must have been expected by Ministers here.* These honourable persons, however, enjoyed the confidence of preceding Viceroys, and of the Ministers themselves, and *deserved* that of Lord Fitzwilliam, who could not, when he dismissed them, have had the smallest grounds for dissatisfaction or mistrust; for he had had no opportunity of observing their conduct, and of ascertaining their principles; and the high estimation in which they stood with his predecessors, and with the British Ministers, was the strongest presumptive proof of their merit. This being the case, it was not possible that Ministers could have expected the dismission of these faithful servants. But, to put the matter beyond all doubt, Mr. Pitt, in a letter to Lord Fitzwilliam, expressed his strong disapprobation of the measure, adding—"That, on the subject of these arrangements, he felt himself bound to adhere to these sentiments, not only with respect to Mr. Beresford, but to the line of con-

* Speech of Lord Milton.—Woodfall's Reports, May 19th, 1795, p. 302.

duct adopted in so many instances towards the former supporters of government; by these sentiments he must, at all events, be guided, from a regard to the King's service, and to his own honour, however sincerely he might lament the consequences which must arise from the present situation." No one, who knew Mr. Pitt, could suppose, for a moment, that he would be guilty of such ingratitude, and of such a breach of his duty, to some of the most approved servants of the Crown, as to consent to sacrifice them to the prejudices of a new colleague; or that he could be so weak as to suffer his own system of policy to be overturned, and a new and opposite system introduced, merely to please Lord Fitzwilliam! And it displayed no ordinary presumption in a new Viceroy to adopt such measures, without the clearly-expressed approbation of Mr. Pitt, and of the other Cabinet Ministers; and, at all events, it was a strange policy to conciliate the Catholics, by endeavouring to disgrace the firmest friends of the establishment. On this trying occasion, all the other seceders from the Whig Party conducted themselves with the strictest honour and propriety. They did not allow it to interrupt the harmony which prevailed in the Cabinet; nor did they suffer themselves to be betrayed, by the taunts and invectives of Opposition, into any explanations, or communications, inconsistent with their public duty; while Lord Fitzwilliam had the mortification to see his cause pleaded by the very men who had pleaded, with equal energy, in favour of those disaffected persons acquitted and condemned, those turbulent Jacobins, whom his Lordship so strongly, and so virtuously, reprobated; and all of whom, be it observed, were most anxious for that abolition of tests and distinctions which his Lordship had endeavoured to promote in Ireland, but which our wiser ancestors deemed essential for the preservation of our constitution in Church and State.

Among objects of minor importance which, during this session, occupied the attention of Parliament, was a motion, brought forward by Mr. Barham, for recalling certain proclamations, which had been issued in the island of Martinique, by the military and naval commanders, Sir Charles Grey, and Sir John Jervis. The purport of these proclamations, which were published in the spring of 1794, was to

levy a general contribution on the proprietors of estates in the island; or, to use the unprecedented expression of one of the proclamations, "*to raise a sum of money adequate to the value of the conquest,*"* and, as the means of effecting this end, to obtain a specification of all property whatever in the island. And, unless this mandate were complied with, these commanders declared it was their firm resolution to avail themselves of the power, with which they were invested, *to order and enforce a general confiscation.* This proclamation was condemned on two grounds; first, as being contrary to the general usages of war; and, secondly, as being a breach of that promise of security to persons and property, which was publicly held forth by the British commanders, previous to the reduction of the island.† Mr. Manning, who seconded this motion, read passages from various letters, which had been transmitted from Martinique, which mentioned the inhuman and avaricious conduct of the British commanders, as having fixed a stain upon the character of the country; and spoke of the example which they had exhibited of rapacity and oppression, as being calculated, on a reverse of fortune, to produce a most dangerous retaliation on the part of the French. The motion was resisted by Mr. Grey, who defended the right of confiscation as perfectly consonant with the law of nations, and reprobated the proceeding as unnecessary, since the proclamations had been disavowed by the Secretary of State; and since, the moment it had been known to the commanders that it occasioned discontent and dissatisfaction, or had, in the smallest degree, been considered as oppressive, it had immediately been annulled.‡ The same motives of resistance were urged by Mr. Secretary Dundas, who moved the previous question, which he followed up with two resolutions:—First, "That the inhabitants of Martinique had not availed themselves of the terms held out to them by the proclamation dated 1st January, 1794; and there was no general rule, founded on the law of nations, respecting private property, which entitled them to the advantages therein offered, after the resistance they had given to his Majesty's forces;"—and, secondly,—"That the two proclamations of the 10th of

* See the proclamations in Woodfall's Reports, June 2, 1795, p. 412, 413.
† Idem, ibid. p. 417. ‡ Idem, ibid. p. 422.

May 1794, never having been acted upon, could not come before the House for their decision; and that the House most cordially agree, in again expressing their thanks to Sir Charles Grey, and Sir John Jervis, in the same terms that their vote of thanks has been recorded on the journals of the House, on the 10th of May last year."

The reasons assigned by Mr. Grey, for putting a negative on the motions, were perfectly valid; because, as the proclamations had been expressly disavowed by Ministers, and annulled by the commanders who issued them, it would be a work of supererogation, to say no more of it, on the part of the House, formally to *recall* them. But the resolutions, proposed by Mr. Dundas, went much too far,—for the first of them, if it had any effective signification, went to justify the very proclamations which the Ministers had condemned. And the last, by renewing the vote of thanks, at that particular period, might, very naturally, be supposed to apply these thanks to the very transaction in question, the discussion of which had alone given birth to the resolution.—That the proclamations, however strictly defensible by the law of nations, as applicable to the rights of conquest, were highly oppressive in their provisions, and objectionable in their principle, would not admit of a doubt, even had not the open disavowal of the government amounted to a full admission of the fact. It ill became the House, therefore, to adopt any resolutions which might be construed into a virtual approbation of them.

The original motion was supported by the West-India interest; but its friends professed themselves satisfied with the public disavowal of the offensive proclamations, and the previous question was carried with only fourteen dissentient voices. The first resolution, proposed by Mr. Dundas, passed by 67 votes against 13; and, strange to say, the second, renewing the vote of thanks, (for which, it is apprehended, no precedent can be found in the annals of Parliament,) was opposed only by one member, the younger Mr. Rose, who courageously resisted all the efforts of party to render the vote unanimous. The Parliament was prorogued on the 27th of June, when the King expressed a hope, founded on the internal situation of France, that the circumstances of

that country might, in their effects, hasten the return of such a state of order and regular government, as might be capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of amity and peace with other powers.

During this session, the long-protracted trial of Mr. Hastings terminated in his honourable acquittal on every charge. It is not necessary to call in question the justice or the policy of his impeachment, though very much might be, and has been, urged against both, to support a charge of *persecution*—for, persecuted a man must be, whatever his alleged or real guilt, over whose head the sword of the law is suspended for the long term of *seven years!* Such lengthened trials are repugnant to the genius and spirit of British jurisprudence. The cause of such unjustifiable delay in the administration of criminal justice, whatever it be, ought to be removed. It subjects the innocent man to a punishment as severe as could be inflicted on the guilty. It keeps him, for a series of years, in a state of constraint, inactivity, and suspence, and subjects him to losses of various kinds, more ruinous than any fine which the court could impose. The Commons threw the blame of the delay on the Lords, who had only devoted a few days in each session to the trial; but the Commons themselves were not wholly exempted from censure, since their managers were suffered to occupy several days in the delivery of a single speech, as if more intent on displaying their own powers of eloquence, than in promoting the ends of substantial justice.

It requires, however, a radical change in the mode of conducting impeachments, before this most grievous evil can be removed. There ought to be a limited time between the period for preferring the charges before the High Court of Parliament and the final delivery of the sentence, beyond which no trial should be protracted. At all events, no prorogation of the House of Lords ought to take place until the trial should be over. Another regulation, essential to the due administration of justice, is, that the court should be subjected to the same rules as other criminal courts,—so far as respects the delivery of their verdict,—they ought not to separate, after the defence is closed, until the verdict has been pronounced. The high character which Mr.

Hastings bore; the eminent services which he had rendered to his country; his many virtues, both public and private; all combined to render his acquittal a source of satisfaction to a great majority of the people; while it heightened the public feeling at the oppression which he had endured by the unprecedented length of his trial.

Pending these discussions in the British Parliament, the operations on the Continent were such as could not be contemplated without pain, by every friend to humanity. Poland, on the one hand, exhibited a scene of desolation and slaughter, created by the unprincipled ambition of the most atrocious despotism;—while France, on the other, displayed the triumph of a sanguinary democracy, over every principle of social order, and every effort of legitimate power. In Poland, the Empress of Russia, persisting in her plan of being effective Sovereign of the country, and of making her will the law of an independent State, instructed her ambassador, a Baron Ingelstrohm, to insult the King, and to control the proceedings of the Diet, by the presence of an armed force. Under such auspices, the unhappy Poles were compelled to repeal all those laws, and to annul all those regulations, which were the result of their deliberate reflection, and which were calculated to ensure the independence and happiness of their country. It was not possible that a people, who knew the value of freedom, and who possessed the spirit of men, could long endure a state of such intolerable bondage, without making some effort to relieve themselves from these disgraceful shackles.

During these struggles, Kosciusko appeared on the public stage. He was a soldier of fortune; accustomed to revolutions; active, energetic, full of resources, and ardently attached to his native country. He had obtained from the Revolutionary Government of France, whither he had returned, after the unsuccessful attempt to resist the Russians, when they overthrew the Polish Constitution of 1791, a considerable sum of money, with which he hastened back to Poland, and, collecting a large body of people, early in 1794, attacked the Prussians and Austrians in different quarters, gained many advantages over

them, and restored the constitution which Catherine had suppressed. Fifteen thousand Russians were, at this time, in the capital; but having endeavoured, on the approach of Kosciusko, to make themselves masters of the arsenal, they were successfully opposed by the armed citizens, who, after a desperate engagement, drove them out of the city. In May, 1795, the cause of freedom appeared more likely to prosper than it had been at any period since the commencement of this unequal struggle. The Polish army amounted to nearly seventy thousand men, besides a numerous and warlike peasantry, ever ready to fly to arms, when called upon to assist their gallant countrymen.

But it did not meet the views of the neighbouring powers to suffer this state of things to continue. The King of Prussia, by a base dereliction of every principle which he advanced when he first entered into, or rather formed, the confederacy against France, had, in the most dishonourable manner, deserted the allies, and made a separate peace with the French Republic,* whose armies were to be left in possession of the Prussian territory, on the left bank of the Rhine. This act was rendered more detestable by the motive which gave rise to it; for it is clear that the Prussian Monarch was induced to desist from his opposition to the regicides of France, by a desire to employ his troops against the patriots of Poland. He entered that country with a powerful army, laid siege to Cracow, which surrendered on the fifteenth of June, and, having collected all the Russians in the neighbourhood of Warsaw, he formed the siege of the capital, the speedy reduction of which he regarded as a matter of certainty. Kosciusko, however, strained every nerve to collect an adequate force for the frustration of this design. On the eleventh of June, he approached Warsaw, forced all the Russian posts, and established himself in an advantageous position, in front of the city.—Here his army received constant reinforcements, and he was enabled to throw up formidable intrenchments, from which he battered the Prussian camp.

* This peace was signed at Basil, in Switzerland, on the 5th of April, 1795, by Baron Hardenberg, on the part of the King; and by M. Barthelemy, on the part of the French government.

By these means the Prussians, after bombarding the city without effect, at intervals, for several weeks, were at last reluctantly compelled to raise the siege on the fifth of September.—But the triumph of the Poles was of short duration. A powerful army of Russians now entered their country under the command of Suwarrow, the celebrated conqueror of Ismael, bore down all opposition, and, after defeating six thousand Poles, under Kosciusko, and taking their general prisoner,* advanced against the capital itself. The city had a garrison of ten thousand men, under the Generals Madalinski and Dambrowski, who resolved to defend it to the last extremity.—The assailants, under Suwarrow, amounted to sixty thousand; the Russian General resolved to take it by assault. The conflict was sustained with desperate courage, and unshaken resolution, for eight hours, when the Russians obtained possession of the suburb of Prague, where they committed a dreadful slaughter. The city being now rendered incapable of further resistance, a proposal was made to capitulate; but the only terms which the inflexible conqueror would consent to grant, were security of life and property, forgiveness for the past, and permission to all, who did not chuse to capitulate, to leave the place. Warsaw was delivered up to the enemy on the 19th of September; and, before the close of the year, the whole country was completely subjugated.—The Polish monarchy was dissolved; its territory divided between the three neighbouring powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria; and its sovereign degraded into a miserable stipendiary of the Court of St. Petersburgh! In this instance, the three potentates, who had first, and most loudly, reprobated the outrageous conduct of the French Revolutionists, concurred in pursuing a similar line of conduct themselves. Without the smallest provocation, or any colourable pretext, they invaded the kingdom of an independent power, dictated laws to him in his capital, destroyed the constitution of his country,

* This action was fought on the tenth of October.—The Poles displayed great valour, and fought with great obstinacy; but they were at last compelled to yield to superior numbers. The Polish General, Poniatouski, who was stationed, with 4,000 men, to prevent any reinforcement from being sent to the Russians engaged with Kosciusko, neglected to perform his duty; and to that neglect, the loss of this battle, which, notwithstanding the smallness of the numbers engaged on either side, decided the fate of Poland, was ascribed.

murdered his subjects for their loyalty and patriotism, and, finally, hurled him from his Throne. In their condemnation of the rebels and regicides of France, these Princes pronounced their own sentence.—An act of greater violence and injustice stains not the annals of guilty ambition. It has extorted the maledictions of the present age,—and posterity will receive it with execration and horror! The fall of the kingdom of Poland may be chiefly ascribed to the radical defects in her Constitution, which left not to the King sufficient power, nor to the people sufficient freedom. A turbulent, overbearing, and tyrannical aristocracy domineered alike over their Sovereign and their Slaves. The intrigues, inseparable from an elective monarchy, were most unfavourable to the establishment of any settled system of government; while they invited the interference and encroachments of the neighbouring states. At the same time that the Polish nobles enslaved the peasantry, and fettered the Crown, they were not of sufficient strength themselves, either to prevent such encroachments, or to supply the defect of popular freedom, on the one hand, and of regal prerogative, on the other. That the state of the people was rendered worse by this dismemberment of their country, is very far from certain; but even admitting their condition to have been improved, that consideration affords no excuse for the injustice of the act. It is worthy of remark, that the Revolutionary Government of France, who had formed a secret alliance with the Patriots of Poland, departed, in this instance, from their usual policy; and, in violation of their own great principle of giving liberty to all nations, who should demand it at their hands, refused to assist the only people in Europe who required their aid, in securing their freedom and independence against the attacks of unprincipled and insatiate ambition.

The rulers of the French Republic having completed the conquest of Holland, and detached the King of Prussia from the confederacy, now directed their attention to the conclusion of a peace with Spain. The feeble government of Madrid had but ill-seconded the gallantry of the troops, and the generous spirit of the people; and, after some inadequate attempts to resist the progress of the French, who had gained a footing in the frontier provinces of Spain, the Ministers consented to

open a negotiation at Basil, where a peace was concluded on the twenty-second of July, by which the Spanish part of the island of Saint Domingo, in the West Indies, was ceded to the French, in return for the restoration of all the places which they had taken from the Spaniards. Spain acknowledged the French and Batavian Republics, and France accepted her mediation in favour of Portugal, Naples, Sardinia, and Parma, whenever their respective Sovereigns should be disposed to make peace. This wise policy of diminishing the number of their enemies, without any sacrifice of their grand objects, or of their leading principles, was persisted in by the prevailing party in the French government, after the death of Robespierre, for some time; and it led them to exert every effort to pacify the Royalists in La Vendée. For this purpose, they made the most liberal offers to Charette and Comartin, the chiefs of the Vendeans and the Chouans; and, forsaking all the high and threatening language of contempt and revenge, they, at length, consented to treat with these "leaders of banditti," as they had been so frequently styled in the Convention, on a footing of equality, and to suffer them to prescribe terms which placed the people, under their influence and protection, in a much better situation than all the other inhabitants of France. By the treaty which Charette signed, in the name, and on behalf, of the Vendeans, on the 7th of March 1795, the Convention stipulated to advance eighty millions of livres (nearly four millions sterling) to indemnify the inhabitants of La Vendée for the losses which they had sustained from the ravages of civil war, and the wanton devastations of the conventional agents. Four millions were assigned for discharging the contracts made by the Vendean Generals. The command of two thousand men to be stationed in La Vendée, and paid by the government, was given to Charette, who was also to make out a list of such persons as were to be banished from the country. The free exercise of the Catholic worship was allowed, and permission given to purchase a church for the purpose, on condition only that it should have no bells, and that no *exterior ceremonies* should be observed. The non-juring priests were permitted to return to La Vendée, and to be restored to their patrimonial estates, but not to their benefices; the Republican division of countries into *districts* and *municipalities* was not to extend to La Vendée; and last,

though not least, this favoured country was formally exempted from the effect of the terrible law of *requisitions* for the term of five years.—The only return stipulated for these important concessions was, *the acknowledgment of the French Republic.*—Terms nearly as favourable were granted to the Chouans, by a separate treaty.

But it must not be supposed that, however important the object to be attained by the pacification of La Vendée was to the Republican government, they were either sincere in their reconciliation, or meant to abide by the terms which they had granted. They knew that, by this means, they should break the very bond of the Royalist confederacy; that they should render it a matter of great difficulty to the members of it to re-collect their scattered forces, and to resume offensive operations;—and they hoped, by inspiring the chiefs with a blind confidence, either gradually to gain them over to the Republican interest, or so to put them off their guard, that they might be easily seized, whenever the government should be prepared to throw off the mask. Indeed, the very terms of the treaty sufficed to inspire mistrust of their motives, and suspicions of their designs;—for some of them were a direct violation of existing laws; those, for instance, which related to the division of the country, and the exemption from requisitions. Indeed, it soon became apparent, that there did not exist the smallest intention, on the part of the Revolutionary government, to fulfil these stipulations. They detained the officers whom they had received as hostages, after the Vendean leaders had performed every condition imposed upon them;—and they soon after, under a false pretext, apprehended Comartin, the leader of the Chouans. The consequence of this treachery was, that the Chouans had again recourse to arms;—as they invested the town of Grandchamp, they were attacked by a superior body of Republicans, who came upon them by surprize, on the twenty-eighth of May, took several of their officers, and put them to flight.

The British Ministers were duly apprized of all these movements, and Mr. Windham, in whose department the correspondence lay, had kept up a constant communication with the French Royalists, as well in

France as in other countries. It is highly probable, from the natural disposition of the human mind, to believe every object of earnest desire easy of attainment, that the unhappy emigrants convinced Mr. Windham that the power and resources of the Royalists were much greater than they really were. It is, however, certain that, had they received effectual assistance from this country two years before, had a powerful army, with abundance of arms, ammunition, and accoutrements, for their followers, been then sent to join them, a most important diversion might have been created, and, possibly, the Republic might have been shaken to its very centre. It was not now too late to assist the French Royalists; though the difficulty of affording effectual assistance was considerably increased, and though an infinitely greater force would be necessary now to enable them to make a successful stand, than would have been requisite for the same purpose, previous to the death of D'Elbée and Bonchamp. The emigrants were themselves divided as to the plan of operations best calculated to be productive of success.—While some were for limiting the attempt to those countries in which the Vendeans and Chouans had signalized their courage, and displayed their loyalty, others insisted on the necessity of a more comprehensive system, of a more extended line of action. These founded their opinion on the existence of numerous bodies of men, attached to Monarchy, in the different provinces of Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, the Lyonnois, and Alsace; and they recommended that an expedition should be undertaken in six grand divisions,—those on the coast to be composed of English, and those on the southern frontier to consist of Austrians. This formidable attack would, it was conceived, call forth the spirit of Royalty, in every quarter of the Republic, and create such a force as her rulers would not be able to subdue. The advocates for this scheme further maintained, that it would be much better to send no expedition at all, than to send one on a contracted scale, which would only serve to draw the Royalists forth to certain destruction. There could be no doubt that a plan so extensive, if it could be carried into effect, was the most wise and politic of any that could be adopted. But the situation of Austria, at this moment, deserted as she was by her Continental allies and pressed by the immense force of France, rendered her incapable of contributing to the success of such a scheme, in the way

proposed. It only remained, therefore, for consideration, whether Great Britain should, with the resources at her command, send succours to the Royalists in Brittany, and the adjacent provinces. Here, indeed, the alternative suggested was worthy of the deepest attention;—and, without having recourse to the most unfair mode of judging, from the event, it appears clear, that little success could be expected from such limited assistance as a small force could afford. If twenty thousand British troops had been employed for this purpose, in addition to the force which the emigrants could muster, the expedition would have enabled the Royalists in France to shew themselves without danger; and the extent of their force, and the practicability of their plans, would thus have been fully ascertained; while a powerful diversion would have been created, highly favourable to the operations of our allies on the Rhine.

The British Cabinet, however, appeared unwilling to adopt any decisive plan of operations on the French coast, and determined to let the Royalists act for themselves, with such assistance of arms and money as England could afford. Agreeably to this decision, a small armament was prepared in the month of June.—It consisted of all the emigrant nobility, then in England; who had enlisted in their service, with more zeal than prudence, a number of French prisoners of war, who were Republicans in heart, and who only wanted an opportunity to return to their native country. The whole formed a body of about three thousand men, who were landed on a peninsula, in the bay of Quiberon, on the southern coast of Brittany, on the 27th of June. Here they attacked a fort, defended by three thousand Republicans, which they speedily reduced; and were, in a few days, joined by a body of Chouans, who increased their numbers to twelve thousand. During this time arms were distributed among the people of the country, who were favourably disposed; and sanguine expectations were entertained of being able to raise an army capable of opposing the Republicans in the field.

Count D'Herville, a gallant and experienced officer, now placed himself at the head of a large body of Chouans, and made an attempt

to penetrate into the country; but, on the approach of a small Republican force, his followers forsook him, in the most dastardly manner, threw down their arms, and fled. In order to confine the Royalists to the contracted space of the peninsula which they occupied, the Republicans erected three forts at the neck of it. These the Royalists resolved to attack on the night of the 15th of July.—They carried two of them; but, being excessively galled by a masked battery, on their approach to the third, they were compelled to retreat; and were indebted for their safety to the seasonable fire from the British ships, which checked the victorious Republicans in their pursuit, and made them fly in their turn. The failure of this attempt produced dissentions among the Royalists, which were reported, with great exaggerations, no doubt, to the Republican General, Hoche, by those French prisoners who had been enlisted in England, and who now deserted. Through the treachery of these miscreants, Hoche obtained the watchword of the Royalists, whose camp he surprised in the night of the 20th of July, and took or slew the greater part of them. The young Count de Sombreuil, however, at the head of a gallant body of emigrants, continued to make such a desperate resistance, that Hoche was induced to enter into a capitulation with them, by which they were to be treated as prisoners of war, and their personal safety insured. All the stores, ammunition, and baggage, fell into the hands of the enemy. Thus ended this abortive attempt, in which some of the best blood of ancient France was shed. Sombreuil, and his gallant associates, were, by a most scandalous breach of faith, tried, condemned, and executed, as traitors. One hundred and eighty-seven Royalists, including the Bishop of Dol, and several of his clergy, who had accompanied the expedition, were murdered in cold blood, on this occasion. The British squadron hovered on the coast for some time; and, having failed in an attempt to take the island of Noirmoutier, succeeded in gaining possession of Isle Dieu, which they fortified.

The alarm, however, which this expedition, all disastrous as it proved, gave to the rulers of the Republic, induced them to keep a portion of those forces which were destined to act against Germany, in the countries adjoining the coast of Brittany. This, and the immense

loss of men which their dear-bought victories had occasioned, deprived their operations on the Rhine of that character of vigour and activity which they had been accustomed to bear. Of all the possessions of Austria, on the French side of the Rhine, Luxemburgh only remained. —This was invested; and, receiving no relief, it surrendered, by capitulation, on the 17th of June. Jourdan crossed the Rhine, in August, took Dusseldorf, and compelled the Austrians to retire. Pichegru, soon after, reduced Manheim, and gained a footing on the right bank of the river, so as to intercept the communication between the two Austrian armies, under the respective commands of Clerfayt and Wurmser. One strong division of the French, having pushed forwards, attacked a part of Wurmser's army, which they defeated; but, being more intent on plunder than on improving their victory, they were attacked, in their turn, by the Austrian cavalry; and, after sustaining considerable loss, compelled to fall back upon Manheim. Clerfayt, meanwhile, having received reinforcements, advanced against Jourdan's army, which had now invested Mentz; and, falling upon its rear, put it to flight, and took the battering train destined for the siege. Jourdan was compelled to retire to Dusseldorf; and, being closely pressed by the Austrians, he suffered greatly in his retreat. After these disasters, Pichegru, having thrown ten thousand men into Manheim, re-crossed the Rhine, and repaired to the entrenched camp before Mentz, which was very soon attacked by the Austrians, with such vigour and effect, that the French were completely defeated, all their works demolished, and all their artillery taken. Clerfayt, having attained this object, and raised the siege of Mentz, effected a junction with Wurmser, and hastened to attack Jourdan, who was speedily compelled to retreat. He was followed closely by the Austrians, who again obtained possession of the Palatinate, and of the country between the Rhine and the Moselle; and were preparing to extend their conquests, when their career of victory was stopped by the timely junction of Jourdan's army with that of Pichegru. Manheim, however, was recovered, after a short siege, and the garrison, consisting of eight thousand men, the rest having perished in the defence of the place, surrendered prisoners of war. The approach of winter put an end to the campaign, after an useless effusion of blood; and a sus-

pension of arms, for three months, was agreed on between the hostile generals.

During these military operations, the interior of the French Republic was far from that state of tranquillity which the destruction of the system of terror had given reason to expect. That system had still its advocates, who had no other chance for distinction and profit than its revival could afford; and though they formed a contemptible minority, in point of numbers, they knew, by experience, that activity, resolution, and vigour, would often supply the defect of numerical strength. The trial and execution of the judges and jurors of the Tribunal of Blood, established by Robespierre, of the Public Accuser, and of several other agents and emissaries of terror, at once alarmed and enraged them; and, mustering their forces, in the factious suburb of St. Anthony, they resolved to try the effect of a measure which had often succeeded in the early stages of the Revolution. They marched against the Convention, on the twentieth of May; and, demanding bread and the Constitution of 1793, they entered the hall, and loaded the members with insults, reproaches, and abuse. One of the members, Ferrand, was killed by the mob; and his head, being cut off, was stuck on a pike. Most of the others sought for safety in flight; and but few remaining, except those who favoured the views of the insurgents, four of these successively mounted the tribune,—Durou, Goujon, Dusquesnoi, and Barbotte,—and proposed various decrees, the object of which was to repeal the laws, which had been passed against the Terrorists, Robespierre, and his adherents. But the armed citizens, and a body of soldiers, having at length marched to the relief of the Convention, the insurgents deemed it prudent to decamp; and, the members returning, the decrees just passed were repealed, and tranquillity was apparently restored.

The same scene, however, was renewed on the following day. The Jacobins, reinforced by great numbers of the most desperate and abandoned of the populace, and provided with artillery, again assailed the Convention, who were reduced to the necessity of feigning a compliance with all their demands;—satisfied with which, they consented

to disperse.—They meditated, however, a third attack; but the Convention had now adopted the necessary precautions, and collected such a force, as to sanction, and give effect to, the tone of authority which they resolved to assume.—Thus strengthened, they declared to the insurgents, that, unless they delivered up their arms, together with the murderer of Ferrand, they should be proclaimed rebels, and treated as such. The insurgents, who had been apprized of the resolution of the armed citizens to support the Convention, had made preparations for their own defence, by closing, as well as they could, all the avenues to their head-quarters, the suburbs of Saint Anthony. But being threatened with a bombardment, the inhabitants dreading the destruction of their houses, compelled them to surrender at discretion; for the Convention had wisely refused to listen to any conditions. This spirit of resistance had spread much wider than had been at first suspected. The Jacobins of Toulon had taken up arms, and, in a conflict with their opponents, had slain a member of the Convention; but, on their march to join their confederates at Marseilles, they were overtaken by some troops of the line, who dispersed them with great slaughter. Collot D'Herbois, with Billaud Varennes, and Barrere, members of Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety, and partners in his crimes, had been sentenced to be transported to Guiana; but the Convention, enraged at these new plots, repented of their lenity, and now resolved to inflict on them a severer punishment. Fortunately, however, for the culprits, the two first of them had sailed before the order to send them back to Paris reached the port at which they embarked. Barrere was thrown into prison; but he contrived to escape the hands of justice, and was reserved to become one of the confidential writers of Buonaparte.

The unhappy son of Louis XVI. who, since the death of his father, had remained a prisoner in the Temple, died, on the 9th of June, in the twelfth year of his age. His premature death was owing to the diabolical means used by the infamous wretches to whose care he had been entrusted, for debilitating his body, and rendering it a prey to disease. The Convention, who had consigned him to their custody, and who sanctioned the base and inhuman treatment which he expe-

rienced, were as much guilty of his murder as if they had, by a formal vote, consigned him to the scaffold. It was, probably, the general commisseration, which the fate of this poor, persecuted boy, this innocent descendant of a long line of kings, excited, that induced the present rulers to liberate the only remaining child of their murdered sovereigns. A negotiation for restoring her to liberty, by exchanging the Princess Royal of France for the Commissioners arrested by Dumouriez, and for the French Ambassador to the Porte, who had been intercepted, and seized by the Austrians, was opened in the Summer, and brought to a conclusion at the close of the year, when this virtuous and amiable Princess was conveyed to Basil, whence she proceeded to Vienna.

After the humiliation and suppression of the Jacobin Insurgents, the attention of the Convention was devoted, during the remainder of the summer, to the formation of another new constitution.—This business was confided to a committee of eleven members,—Lanjuinais, Lareveillere-Lepaux, Thibaudeau, Boissy D'Anglas, Le Sage, Latouche, Louvet, Berthier, Daunou, Durand, and Baudin, who completed their labours in June, on the twenty-third of which month they presented the fruits of them to the Convention. This new specimen of the wonderful proficiency of French Legislators, in the difficult science of making constitutions, underwent long and serious discussions. It vested the executive power in five persons, to be nominated by the Legislature, and to be called the Directory. They were to be forty years of age, and must have either been members of the Legislative body, or have filled some of the great offices under the government, which, however, they must have resigned a whole year, before they could become eligible. One of the Directors was to go out yearly, and another to be elected in his stead; and no one could be re-chosen till after an interval of five years.—The Legislative power was vested in two councils;—the Council of Elders, consisting of two hundred and fifty members; and the Council of Five Hundred. One-third of the members of each council were to lose their seats every year.—They might be re-elected on their first resignation; but not after, until an interval of two years had expired. The right of proposing laws was vested,

exclusively, in the Council of Five Hundred; and the right of acceptance, or rejection, in the Council of Elders. The resolutions of the former, when sanctioned by the latter, became laws.—When rejected, they could not be presented again to the Council of Elders for two years. The mode prescribed for the election of Directors was this:—the Council of Five Hundred were to make out a list of ten persons for each Director, out of which the Council of Elders were to chuse one.—The Directory might invite the Legislature to take subjects into their consideration; but could lay no plans or proposals before them, except such as related to peace or war. No treaty concluded by the Directory was valid without the ratification of the Councils, without whose consent, too, no war could be entered upon.

The people of France, who were little able to judge of the merits, or demerits, of political institutions, except by their effects, instead of analysing this new constitution, with a view to ascertain the extent of its positive excellence, contented themselves with comparing it with its immediate predecessor;—a comparison which could not fail to be advantageous to this last offspring of legislative wisdom, and to inspire a certain degree of satisfaction and content.—It promised, indeed, the freedom of worship, and the Liberty of the Press; but these advantages were conferred, in *theory*, by the first Revolutionary code, though in point of practice, they no more existed in France than in China; and there was no more security for their enjoyment in future, than there had been heretofore. It did not suit the views of the present advocates of moderation, to relax in their severity against those firm adherents to the religion and laws of their ancestors—the emigrants.—On the contrary, by one of the articles of the new code, it was positively declared, that in no possible case would the return of those Frenchmen be allowed, who had abandoned their country, after the fifteenth of July, 1789; and, by the assumption of a power which they did not, and could not, possess, they forbade the Legislature to make any further exceptions in favour of this unhappy and meritorious description of men.

This constitution, like those which preceded it, was prefaced with a declaration of the Rights of Man; but the definition now given, or

rather attempted to be given, to the *equality* which it sanctioned, was essentially different from the signification of the same term, as defined by the former expositors of Revolutionary doctrines and laws. Equality was now declared to consist in this,—" that the law is to be the " same for all, whether it protect, or whether it punish." Now, this is no more a definition of equality, than it is a definition of property. It is, in fact, an attribute of law; and these metaphysical philosophers these legislative sages, who had the vanity to think themselves competent to frame laws, and a constitution, for subject millions, and have been praised for their great abilities, their promtitude of intectual and active powers,* had not the sense to perceive the difference between a definition of equality, and an attribute of law. They absolutely confounded equality and law; objects as distinct as any terms of different import; as a variety of ranks, and the foundation of every moral or political principle. † Though it is difficult to understand how a principle characteristic of law could be received by a whole nation as a definition of equality, it was easy to discover the intention of committing this palpable fraud, which, devised by the Committee of Eleven, passed current with the rest of the Convention, and with the people at large. Equality had been the ladder by which every aspiring demagogue, from the first dawn of the Revolution, had reached the summit of power. As it was equally accessible to every man of unprincipled ambition, it had stimulated new competitors, who, having thus attained the object of their pursuits, passed away, in rapid succession, like the figures in a phantasmagoria. Hence, the possession of power was dangerous and precarious in proportion to the facility with which it was obtained. The framers of the present constitution were fully sensible of this evil, and, therefore, resolved to destroy the ladder by which they had climbed to the sovereignty, that no fresh succession of demagogues might use it for the same purpose, to their prejudice. For this reason they banished equality from their constitution and laws. But, in order to deceive the people, and to preserve to themselves the

* See Dr. Bisset's History of the Reign of George III. Vol. VI. and Ottridge's Annual Register for 1795, passim.

† The *Rise, Progress, and Consequences of the New Opinions and Principles lately introduced into France, with Observations.*—P. 164.

reputation of being the friends of equality, they had introduced the *word* equality into their declaration of the Rights of Man, and had even asserted it to be one of those rights; but that equality might cease to be formidable to themselves, they made it almost synonimous with law,—a new meaning which had never been affixed to it in any language since the creation of the world!*

Another Revolutionary instrument, which had proved extremely efficacious in facilitating the mighty work of subverting the Throne and the Altar, and of eradicating, from the minds of the people, every religious and moral principle, and sentiment, it was now deemed expedient to throw aside. Four articles of the new Code† were devoted to the prohibition of all popular clubs, of whatever denomination.—It was declared, that no assembly of citizens could assume the appellation of *popular society;* that no private society, for the discussion of political questions, could correspond, or be affiliated, with another; nor hold public sittings, composed of members and assistants distinguished from each other; nor impose conditions of admission and eligibility; nor exercise the right of expulsion; nor give to its members any external mark of distinction.—The people could exercise their political rights only in the primary and municipal assemblies. Any man, individually, might present petitions to the public authorities; but all *collective* petitions were forbidden, except the petitions of public bodies in matters connected with their immediate functions.—And petitioners of every description were, lastly, enjoined never to lose sight of the respect due to the constituted authorities. A singular injunction to be placed in a constitutional code; though it is not extraordinary, that it should have suggested itself to any of the members of an assembly which had found it necessary, but a few weeks before, to forbid, by a legislative decree, the use of personal invectives, and abusive language, by any of themselves, under pain of imprisonment. But it is curious to remark, that, while the members of the British Opposition were contending that *corresponding* and *affiliated* societies were not only constitutional, but perfectly compatible with the peace and security of the kingdom, the

* The *Rise, Progress, &c.* p. 165. † Art. 361, 362, 363, 364.

very men who were the original projectors of such societies, who had furnished the model of them to their admiring votaries, and servile imitators in this country, warned by the dreadful experience of their destructive efficacy, and by their perfect inadequacy to the accomplishment of any one purpose of practical utility, now proclaimed to the world the danger of their existence, and their total incompatibility with social order, under any form of government.—These clubs, like equality, had been the means of advancing many of the most sanguinary Revolutionists to the highest pinnacle of power; they had been the instruments by which different Revolutions in the government had been effected; they had been successfully employed to excite *political* insurrections, and to fill the minds of the soldiers with Revolutionary principles;—and the leading men in the present government were indebted to them, for whatever portion of power they possessed, for whatever degree of consequence they enjoyed. Nothing, therefore, but the full conviction of their dangerous tendency, of the impossibility of giving any thing like consistency, or permanency, to the new constitution, while they were allowed to exist, joined to a secret dread that they might be used as instruments for their own destruction, could have induced these men to consent to their suppression.

The novel attempt to vest the executive power in five persons, and many other regulations in this code, were little calculated to produce that union of sentiment, and that vigour of action, which are essential to good government, and, consequently, to the well-being of a state. It seems, indeed, if we suppose the committee to have been actuated by any fixed principle, that it was their leading object, in appointing a Directory, to prevent unanimity, and to encourage dissention. Their jealousy of the executive power induced them to deprive it of any thing which could impart energy to its councils, decision to its measures, or dignity to its character; while it led them to establish that independence of the legislative body, which gave it a marked superiority over the supreme power in the state, and which was, in fact, incompatible with the existence of an efficient executive power. The five directors appear to have been intended as spies on each other; and to have been deprived of the privilege of pro-

roguing or dissolving the legislative bodies, for the purpose of leaving these last the power of dismissing them, if they should find them adverse to their own views, or inadequate to the purposes for which they were created.

When they had completed their constitution, the Convention, disposed rather to violate a principle, than to resign their power, tacked to the new code two decrees, the object of which was to compel the people to elect two-thirds of the members of the new councils, from the deputies of the existing assembly.—These decrees being attached to the constitutional code, were supposed, by many, to form a part of it; and, as they did not feel themselves at liberty to make partial exceptions, but imagined themselves called upon to accept or reject the whole, they gave their assent to the decrees which they disapproved, rather than negative the constitution, which they had not time to examine; but which, they took for granted, must be better than the last. The Convention, meanwhile, exercised every art of intrigue to render this monstrous abuse of power palatable to the nation; and they succeeded, by their sophistry, in persuading numbers, that it would be highly dangerous to trust the safety of the State to new and inexperienced men, and thus induced the belief, that, in gratifying their private ambition, they were actuated, solely, by a desire to promote the public good.

The majority of the nation, however, decidedly condemned, both the decrees themselves, and the mode by which their acceptance was attempted to be enforced. One principal recommendation to the new constitution, which the primary assemblies, to which it was referred, had neither time to consider, nor ability to appreciate, was the power which it afforded of chusing a new legislative body, composed of men of fair character, and moderate principles, and of getting rid of a Convention, the great majority of whose members were men of infamous character; and all of whom had either participated in, or afforded their countenance and sanction to, those acts of tyranny and oppression which had destroyed all social comfort, and all personal security, and to those deeds of blood, which had thinned the popula-

tion of the country, and disgraced its character for ever. The Parisians, in particular, who had been close spectators, and too often active accomplices, in these dreadful scenes, and who, tired with the distractions to which they had been so long exposed, earnestly desired the restoration of a secure and tranquil state, considered this power as of the first importance, and resolved to exercise it, in spite of the Convention. The primary assemblies of the capital met before the appointed day, and chose the electors, by whom their members were to be chosen, agreeably to the circuitous mode of election, fixed by the constitutional code. The Convention, however, fearful lest the example of Paris might be followed throughout the Republic, sent a military force to disperse these assemblies. Hence an inveterate animosity was engendered between the Parisians and the Convention, which broke forth into mutual reproaches and complaints, not more replete with acrimony than with truth. The consciousness of having rescued the Convention from the tyranny of Robespierre inspired the Parisians with an eager desire to punish the members for their present ingratitude, not less than for their meditated usurpation.

The Convention knew, from experience, the inefficacy of arguments, when opposed to physical strength; and, deficient as they were in the former, they resolved not to be wanting in the latter. They silently collected a body of regular troops, which they drew from the army on the frontiers; and they even descended to strengthen themselves, by releasing the imprisoned Terrorists, who, they knew, were the most decided enemies of the citizens of Paris. At this last step the Parisians were, very justly, enraged; and they concluded that it was in contemplation to renew the horrid massacres of September—a conclusion the more natural, as Tallien, who was one of the projectors of those massacres, had now great weight in the Convention. Self-defence now justified what animosity originally dictated, and they resolved to oppose force by force. But their measures were neither planned with sufficient caution, nor executed with sufficient promptitude. Instead of trusting to themselves, and collecting their whole force, which was amply sufficient for the purpose, they relied on the forbearance of the regular troops; and as these had refused, formerly,

to fire on the people, they supposed that they would be equally reluctant to oppose them now. It never entered into their head, that the French troops were traitors only to their lawful Sovereign, and faithful to all traitors. Before, then, they had assembled their forces, and prepared for action, General Menou was sent, by the Convention, at the head of their troops, on the fourth of October, to command them to lay down their arms. The Parisians replied, that they were perfectly ready so to do, provided the Terrorists did the same. Whether Menou thought this proposal reasonable or not, he returned to communicate it to his masters, who, enraged at his forbearance to enforce an unconditional compliance with their demands, broke him for disobedience.

At this juncture, a man, destitute of all the feelings of humanity, and known to be as little disposed to forbearance or mercy as the most desperate leader of a ferocious banditti, happened to be at Paris; and, at the suggestion of Barras, the command of the Conventional army was given to him. This was Napoleone Buonaparte. He had, though young, already manifested a most sanguinary disposition, during the massacres of the loyal inhabitants of Toulon; and it was justly concluded, that an occupation more congenial to his soul could not be assigned him, than the destruction of the citizens of Paris, for daring to assert those rights which the New Constitution had conferred, and to resist that unprincipled usurpation of the Convention, which violated its fundamental principle. The night of the fourth of October was the time fixed, by the Parisians, for assembling the different sections of the metropolis;—and, at twelve the next day, they paraded the streets, in arms, and with drums beating.—The battle began in the vicinity of the hall in which the Convention held their sittings; and a desperate conflict ensued between the Parisians and the Terrorists, in which the latter would certainly have been overpowered, but for the effective assistance of the troops of the line, who, to the surprise of the Parisians, had no more objection to fire upon them, than upon the Austrians. Still, though surprised, they were not dismayed; and they maintained the fight, for a considerable time, with great courage and perseverance, against these disciplined and

undisciplined ruffians. But the omission of proper precautions, to secure the co-operation of the different sections, and to make themselves masters of the bridges, exposed them to great disadvantages, and ultimately compelled them to retreat. Still, a desultory kind of engagement was kept up during the whole of the day, and was not finished till midnight; when the Conventional troops remained masters of the field, or rather of the metropolis; and the Convention itself secured the point for which it contended, and once more triumphed over the law.

This defeat was chiefly owing to the misplaced confidence of the Parisians in the forbearance of the regular troops, which prevented them from adopting those means of offence and defence which were perfectly within their power.—But a small portion of their force was engaged; they suffered themselves to be attacked in separate bodies, instead of acting together; they were unprovided with artillery, with which their opponents were amply supplied;—and they were defective in that spirit of subordination which is essential to success in all military operations. They were commanded, on this occasion, by General Danican, an active, enterprising, brave, and intelligent officer; and, had they attended to his directions, and obeyed his commands, it is highly probable that they would have triumphed over their enemies, and rendered a most essential service to their country. The loss which they sustained was never exactly known; but it certainly amounted to some thousands. This defeat was of the utmost consequence to the Convention, as numbers, who were on their march to Paris to assist the Parisians, returned home when apprised of it; and many of the provinces, which were prepared for resistance, were so much discouraged as to give up all thoughts of further opposition. The Parisians were now deprived of all their arms and warlike stores, and a military commission was appointed to try them as rebels.

The Convention gloried in their triumph; and, conscious of their power, betrayed a disposition to exercise it with their ancient rigour.—Though the time approached for their dissolution, they did not appear to have the smallest intention of resigning their seats. Indeed, it

became evident, that the Jacobin faction, in the Convention, whose activity again gave them a temporary predominance, were intent on devising means for perpetuating their authority; and the most serious apprehensions were entertained, that the reign of terror, and of blood, would be immediately renewed. They had appointed a commission of five members, who were to report what measures were proper to be adopted, at this crisis, in order to serve the country.—Before, however, their report was made, the more temperate members of the Convention, ashamed of being rendered passive accomplices in schemes which they condemned, resolved to prevent the execution of the intended project.—Thibaudeau, in an animated speech, exposed the profligacy of the attempt to establish the permanence of the Convention; he insisted on the immediate suppression of the committee of five; and on the dissolution of the Convention on the appointed day.—He was seconded by Lareveilliere-Lepaux; and, being supported by the majority of the members, carried his point.—Accordingly, on the 26th of October, the Convention dissolved itself, and the new Constitution began to take effect.

The naval operations of Britain, during this campaign, though of necessity confined to a narrow sphere, from the extreme caution of the enemy, were uniformly successful. In various actions between single ships, victory constantly declared in favor of the British officers, who exhibited many memorable instances of skill and gallantry.—On the 13th of March, a British squadron, of fourteen sail of the line, under Admiral Hotham, fell in with a French squadron of fifteen, which was conveying a body of troops for the recapture of Corsica.—The French endeavoured to avoid an engagement, but two of their ships being separated from the rest, they made an attempt to save them, and were, by that means brought to action. The two ships, however, the Ca-Ira, of 80 guns, and the Censeur, of 74, with two thousand troops on board, were taken by the English, while the remainder of the fleet escaped to Toulon. While Admiral Cornwallis was stationed on the west coast of France, he was met, off Belleisle, on the 16th of June, by a French force of thirteen ships of the line, to which he had only five to oppose.—He maintained, however, a running fight, during

the whole of the next day, with a force so greatly superior, without suffering the enemy to gain the smallest advantage over him;—and gained a British port in safety. A few days after, the French squadron fell in with Lord Bridport's fleet, off L'Orient, when an action ensued, which ended in the capture of three French ships of the line,—the Alexander, the Formidable, and the Tigre. The rest of the fleet were indebted to the proximity of the land for their escape into port L'Orient. An expedition had been planned for the reduction of the important Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope, which was entrusted to the command of General Clarke and Admiral Elphinstone. After a short and ineffectual defence, it surrendered to the British arms, on the 16th of September.

Thus, at the close of the present campaign, the state of affairs was, upon the whole, more favourable to the allies than otherwise.—Though none of the conquests of the last year were recovered from the French, still they had been prevented, by the Austrians, from making any further progress; and they had rather lost than gained ground. The French navy too, had sustained further losses, while that of Great Britain was strengthened; so that, though there was nothing in the aspect of things very encouraging, there was not any thing to excite despair.

CHAPTER XXIX.

State of the Public mind—Growth of Discontent—The source of it—End and object of the clamours for Peace—Means used for exciting dissatisfaction with the war—Scarcity of Corn falsely ascribed to it—The Press principally employed to promote disaffection—Inadequacy of exertion on the part of the Minister to counteract this effect—Cause and consequence of this inactivity—Importance of the Press, as an engine for directing the Public mind, considered—Too much neglected by Mr. Pitt—Seditious Meetings in the neighbourhood of the Capital—Early Meeting of Parliament—Attack on the King in his way to the House of Lords—Attempt to murder his Majesty in Palace-Yard—The King again attacked on his return to Buckingham-House—These attempts traced to the adoption of French Principles—Consequent Proceedings in Parliament—Address to the King—Lord Lansdowne charges the Ministers with being the authors of the attack—Observations on that Charge—Firmness of his Majesty—Speech from the Throne—Debates on the Address—Mr. Fox's Speech—Falsehood of his assertions exposed—Amendment moved—Opposed by Mr. Pitt—He ridicules the Amendment—Comments on the recent change of form and principles in the French Government—Regards it as competent to preserve the relations of Peace and Amity with other Nations—Lord Grenville's bill for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government—Lord Grenville's Speech—Bill for the suppression of Seditious Meetings, introduced by Mr. Pitt—He explains its principle and object—Debates on the two Bills—Opposed by Messrs. Fox, Grey, and Sheridan, who charge Ministers with having provoked the attack upon the King—Mr. Grey represents the Ministers to be Traitors—Their indecent and unparliamentary language censured—Mr. Canning's Speech—He ascribes the attack on the King to the doctrines broached at Copenhagen-House—Speech of the Attorney-General—Produces several Seditious Publications—Proves the extensive circulation of Treasonable Libels—Demonstrates the necessity of the New Bills—Bills supported by the Country Gentlemen—Speech of Sir Francis Basset—He proves the connection between the meeting at Chalk-Farm and the attack on the King—Angry reply of Mr. Fox—He asserts the design of the House of Stuart to restore Popery in England—Contrary assertion in his History of James the Second—Speech of Lord Mornington—He unfolds the views of the Seditious Societies—Quotes passages from several of their Treasonable Publications—Answer of Mr. Sheridan—He refuses to believe what it does not suit his purpose to admit—Substitutes ridicule for argument, and assertion for proof—Calls the attempt to murder the King *accidental*—His revolutionary logic exposed—His whole speech inflammatory and calculated to excite a revolt—Direct tendency of the Speeches of the Opposition to rouse the people to rebellion—Mr. Fox reduces *resistance* to a question of *prudence*—Indignant reply of Mr. Pitt—Charges Mr. Fox with setting up his own opinion as the standard of truth, and the rule of conduct for Government—Taxes

him with a breach of duty, and a determination to resist the law by force—Mr. Fox re-states his position—Proved to be substantially the same—Its tendency to produce a Civil War demonstrated—Similar sentiments avowed by Mr. Grey—Admirable Speech of Mr. Grant—The Bills justifiable only by necessity—Their Provisions—Professor Christian's opinion of them—Incidental questions arising out of the Debate—Mr. Sheridan's abuse of the Police Magistrates—Reflections on the Subject—His list of their *negative* qualities enlarged—Mr. Reeves's "Thoughts on the English Government"—Denounced as a Libel by Mr. Sturt—Mr. Sheridan takes up the Question—His Speech upon it—Remarks on the novelty of his avowed attachment to the Principles of the Constitution—Ignorance of history, and puerile criticism displayed in the Debate—The Constitutional Lawyers, and Parliamentary Jesters, revile the Productions of the Reverend William Jones, the Reverend John Whitaker, and Mr. Reeves—Mr. Sheridan charges the Pamphlet with being a Libel on the Revolution—His own observations on that event shewn to be libellous—Curious Remark of Mr. Erskine—Excellent Speech of Mr. Windham—He exposes the views of the Whigs in attacking Mr. Reeves—Analyzes the Pamphlet with great judgment and ability—Justifies the passage selected for censure—Ungenerous conduct of Mr. Pitt—Weakness of his argument—Validity of one of his positions contested—The King's power of *making laws* asserted by the Attorney-General—Absurdity of Mr. Sheridan's charge shewn—The Whigs prove themselves enemies to the freedom of the Press, and to the Trial by Jury—Mr. Sheridan's *lenity and mercy* proved to be *tyranny and persecution*—The House pronounce the Tract to be a Libel—Address the King to direct the Attorney-General to prosecute Mr. Reeves as the author—He is tried and acquitted—Subsequent discussion of the subject through the medium of the Press—Disgraceful silence of the Whigs—Legislative measures for diminishing the consumption of Wheat—The Budget—The Loan—Message from the King on the subject of Peace—Debate upon it—Address carried without a division.

[1795.] The war, at this time, had become extremely unpopular in the country; for the greatest efforts had been exerted to persuade the people that it had no definite object; and that, therefore, it was not likely to be brought to a speedy termination.—It is, at all times, easy to convince an unthinking multitude, who act more from their feelings than their intellects, that war, *whatever* be its object or end, is an evil to be avoided; and that peace, on whatever terms and conditions, is a blessing to be courted. Indeed, when a man, with the superior talents and knowledge of Mr. Fox, did not hesitate to subscribe to a similar position, and to avow his preference for a peace, the most iniquitous, over a war, the most just, it cannot be a matter of surprize, that men, unaccustomed to reason, and unable, from education and habit, to enter into those sentiments, principles, and considerations, which lead statesmen, and others, rather to forego the enjoyment of a present good,

and to bear the pressure of a temporary evil, than expose a country to the danger of permanent mischief, should be led to prefer *any peace* to *any war*. From the period of this extraordinary declaration, as if it had served as a text for the comments of disaffection, the endeavours of the members of the seditious societies, to spread discontent through the country, had become more strenuous, and evidently more successfull. *Peace* and *Reform* were the watchwords, repeated from one extremity of the island to the other, by the emissaries of faction, who thus acquired the support of numbers unable to perceive that those who spread this clamour had ulterior views; and, instead of *peace* and *reform*, aimed at *revolt* and *revolution*.—It was a great point gained, if, by inspiring a disgust of the war, the government could be rendered odious, and the King be induced to change his Ministers, and to bring the Opposition into power. Peace was certainly desired by the factious themselves as they felt the importance of a free and open communication with the French, which could not, by any other means, be procured; and therefore, whether considered as a *means* for the attainment of an *end*, or as the *end* itself, it was a great object to them; and every additional advocate gained for peace was a fresh accession of strength to the friends of Revolution.

If it required little ability to render the multitude hostile to any war, it required still less to persuade them of the propriety of opposing the present war. For though, had it been considered merely as a defensive war, in which we had been attacked without provocation, and in which the enemy had made no offer of reparation for her unprovoked aggression, and the injuries consequent upon it, differed in nothing from similar wars, at former periods, and therefore afforded no grounds for a violent opposition to it; yet, all defensive as it unquestionably was, in the strictest sense of the word, it involved so many important considerations, and the discussions to which it had given rise had been extended to so many collateral objects, that it became easy to divert the minds of the people from its real origin, and to make them misapprehend its true cause, purport, and end.—For this insidious and unworthy purpose, every engine was employed. The press groaned with the weight of publications solely designed to promote it. From

the brilliant talents of men in superior stations of life, to the coarsest intellects of unlettered advocates, all were employed in forwarding the same object.—During the summer, meetings had been holden in the fields in the vicinity of the metropolis; debating societies had been opened; and public lectures had been given; at which popular orators were employed to excite discontent at the war, and dissatisfaction with the government.

To the war were ascribed, not only the inconveniences which flowed from the accumulation of taxes, but even the calamities which proceeded from natural causes. A considerable failure in the crops of two successive years proved an efficient ally to these labourers in the vineyard of faction.—Corn had, in consequence, risen to an enormous price;* and this evil was imputed exclusively to the war,—though it is well known, that, however specious the theory, that war increases the price of corn, it stands contradicted by fact; since it has been proved, by a comparative statement of the price of wheat, at different periods of peace and war, during the last century, that corn has been generally dearer in time of peace than in time of war.†

All these efforts to excite discontent were not counteracted by adequate exertions on the other side. The press was, almost exclusively, devoted to the Jacobins. With very few exceptions, indeed, the periodical publications, daily, weekly, monthly, and annual, were appropriated to the purpose of extending the dissemination of Jacobinical principles; and, notwithstanding the direful example which the French Revolution had supplied of the powerful efficacy of this engine of destruction, Mr. Pitt, who had high notions of the potential influence of undirected reason, when employed in the cause of truth and justice, forbore to adopt the necessary means for counteracting the effects of this wide-spreading mischief, and wholly neglected the press, as a channel for the conveyance of antidotes to the most fatal poison which ever infected the mind of man.—The impression which the constant

* Wheat sold for fourteen shillings the bushel.

† See the Rev. J. Brand's intelligent tract on this subject.

repetition of the same complaints, and of the same story, without contradiction, will produce, may readily be conceived.—And it is as much the duty of a Minister to use all the means which his situation affords, for impeding the triumph of falsehood over truth, and for preventing an impression on the public mind, which is more easily made than removed, and which tends to produce an alienation from the person and government of the Sovereign, to loosen the bonds of subordination, and to introduce a restless and turbulent spirit, hostile to the peace and happiness of the community, as it is to provide for the immediate exigencies of the State, for its internal economy, or for its security against external attacks. It was natural for a mind, gifted, as Mr. Pitt's was, with the highest intellectual endowments, to look down with supreme contempt on the wretched sophistry employed by the advocates for French principles;—but, when he saw these principles gaining ground in the country, the government of which was confided to his hands, and chiefly through the medium of the press, it became an essential part of his duty to employ the same instrument for checking their fatal progress. The end was lawful, as the means were justifiable. The conduct which, in the individual, might have been dignified and proper, was neither becoming nor prudent in the Minister. If a society could be formed, with sufficient funds, for establishing a complete control over the press, so as to enable it to disseminate its own principles, throughout a country, in language adapted to every capacity, and was allowed to enjoy the privilege, without interruption, for three years, it would effect a complete revolution, religious, moral, and political, let the establishments of that country be what they might.—In England, it may be said that the laws respecting libels are of themselves sufficient to prevent the evil consequences of similar attempts.—But, besides that the assertion stands confuted by fact, it would be no difficult task so to manage the press as to accomplish the desired purpose, without incurring the penalties of those laws, all loose, undefined, and comprehensive as they are, and inconsistent as they may be deemed by many, from the arbitrary constructions, applications, and modes of proceeding, to which they are liable, with that freedom of discussion which forms one of the most noble and most prominent features in the British Constitution; and to

which many of the religious and civil advantages which Britons enjoy may be fairly imputed, and, indeed, easily traced.

The trials for high treason, at the Old Bailey, had greatly facilitated the plans of the seditious; for they were produced as examples to prove, that there was nothing illegal in the conduct of the factious societies; and that no possible danger could ensue from their proceedings, so long as *peace* and *reform* were their ostensible objects. The credulous multitude gave easy belief to representations which suited their prejudices, while they flattered their consequence. The legal distinctions, which would render the delusion obvious, they had neither the wish to investigate, nor the ability to understand. They saw the plain, broad fact before them,—that a revolutionary plan had been adopted, and, to a certain extent, acted upon; that certain leading characters in the transaction had been prosecuted, tried, and acquitted; and hence, it was no unnatural conclusion for their own minds to draw, even without assistance, that the law sanctioned all attempts of a similar nature. The lessons, then, which were repeated to them, at Chalk Farm, at Copenhagen House, at the various debating societies, and in newspapers, pamphlets, and hand-bills, circulated with profusion, found a ready reception in their minds, and prepared them for corresponding acts of resistance and outrage.

It was during this ferment, that the Minister deemed it expedient to assemble the Parliament at a much earlier period than usual. The 29th of October was the day fixed for its meeting; a day destined for the practical illustration of those vile principles which had been diffused with so much industry, and with such fatal success, during the summer. An immense concourse of people, much greater than had ever been witnessed on a similar occasion, had assembled in the Park, through which the King was to pass, on his way to the House of Lords. As the Royal carriage moved slowly on, the mob pressed close upon it, vociferating, "*Peace!—No war!—No King!*" thus, unwarily, betraying not only the ostensible object, but the *end*, of these violent proceedings. Superadded to these leading demands, were clamours for the dismission of Mr. Pitt, and for bread. At one period, about

midway, between St. James's Palace and the gates of Carlton House, the mob had separated the Royal carriage from the guards who accompanied the King; had pressed close to the door on either side; and so surrounded, almost, the horses, as nearly to impede their course. It seemed, for a short time, to be the resolution of the mob to drag the King from his carriage, and to sacrifice him to their brutal fury.—At least such was the impression made, by their movements, on the minds of those spectators who were at a little distance, and attentively observed the whole transaction. It was impossible, at this moment, not to make the disgraceful comparison between this British mob, and the French mob who stopped the unhappy Louis the Sixteenth, on his road to Saint Cloud. Every thing seemed *French* about them;—their cries, their gestures, their principles, and their actions, all plainly indicated the polluted source whence they sprang, and proved that they were not of *British* origin, or growth.* The coachman, who drove his Majesty, was alarmed for the personal safety of his Sovereign; but, though aware of the danger to which he was exposed, he dared not urge the speed of his horses, who, being used but seldom, and accustomed to the slow pace of a state procession, would, he feared, become restive and unmanageable; so that, in seeking to extricate his Royal Master from one peril, he might possibly subject him to another. Fortunately, most fortunately, for the country, the attempt was not made to perpetrate the meditated deed, at this juncture, when it would have been physically impossible to prevent its execution.

The King reached the Horse Guards, amidst the hisses, groans, and abuse, of a rabble, who had been regularly trained to sedition and treason. The gates were then closed, so as to prevent numbers of the mob from following the Royal carriage to Whitehall.—But, as it was passing through Palace Yard, the coach-window was struck with

* This idea struck me most forcibly; for I had the misfortune to be a spectator of this disgraceful scene.—I have seen many mobs in my life, but never did I behold such an assemblage of ill-looking, desperate wretches, as were collected together on the present occasion.—And, as far as the designs of men can be inferred from their looks, their language, and their gestures, the designs of this rabble, who so basely dishonoured the name and character of Englishmen, were most treasonable and murderous.

violence by something which perforated the glass, and passed with great velocity, very near to the Earl of Westmorland, who was with his Majesty.—From the shape and size of the hole made in the glass, as well as from the great thickness of the glass itself, it was pretty evident that what had passed through it was a *bullet;* and that, as no explosion had been heard, it had been fired from an air gun; for nothing less powerful than some such instrument could have produced the effect. —Whatever it was, there connot exist a doubt, in the mind of any rational being, that it was intended for the purpose of assassination, and that the King was its object.—It is equally certain, that it was a premeditated crime; and when considered, in connection with the insults which the King experienced in the Park, and with the attack made on him, on his return, there is every reason for believing, that they all sprang from the same source, that they were all equally the result of a settled plan, and that they all had the same object in view —the murder of the King, as a preparatory step to a Revolution in the country.—His Majesty pointed out the quarter whence the bullet proceeded; and where stood a dray, before a house in which no person appeared; which was the more singular, as the windows of every other house on the road were filled with spectators who went to see the King pass.*

As soon as the King had opened the Parliament, he returned by the same way to the palace.—He there dismissed his State-coach, and went, as usual, in his chariot, to Buckingham-house. The Park was, by this time, pretty well cleared; and the royal guards, having been dismissed, were on their way to Whitehall. A small party of the mob, having watched for the opportunity, now darted on the King's chariot, and while some of them climbed on the wheels, so as to stop its progress, others flew to the doors. At this critical conjuncture, a gentleman of the Navy Board, who happened to be near the spot, witnessed the daring attempt. His indignant loyalty prompted him to fly to the

* Surmises were drawn from the known principles of the individual to whom the house in question belonged; but it would be alike foolish and unjust to found any conjectures on so precarious and uncertain a foundation.

assistance of his Sovereign; but recollecting the probable inefficacy of his unassisted exertions, he prudently ran after the guards, who were yet within sight, and, providentially, brought them back just in time to prevent the ferocious rebels from dragging the King from his carriage, and from completing their diabolical purpose. Thus, to the activity and presence of mind of this loyal gentleman,* was the country, in all probability, indebted for having rescued her character from the foulest stain which the hand of a regicide could inflict, and which no expiation, no atonement, could ever have effaced. This horrible attempt has, by no contemporary writer, been regarded with that serious attention which its importance, whether considered in itself, or with regard to the causes which gave rise to it, or to the consequences to which it led, imperatively required. On the contrary, it has been passed over lightly; the facts of the case have been imperfectly stated; and a colour has been given to the whole transaction, calculated, if not intended, to prevent that impression which, if viewed in its real light, it could not fail to produce.

In turning our eyes back on the period in which it occurred, it is as difficult to mistake the facts which marked the attempt, and the causes which gave birth to it, as it is to contemplate it without horror and dismay. For five years, the regicidal principles of the French had been industriously propagated throughout the country;—the murder of their benevolent Monarch had been hailed, by their British admirers, as a deed of transcendant patriotism, highly conducive to the establishment of universal freedom; and their example, *without any exception* as to particular deeds or occurrences, had been holden up as worthy of imitation here. It is needless to add, that hatred of Kings, and the extirpation of Monarchy, were leading doctrines in the new Revolutionary creed;—and that no objection had ever been started to them, even in that society of which the three dissenting ministers, Doctors Kippis, Towers, and Price, were distinguished members.—Indeed, the patriotic zeal of the British societies seems to

* His name was Bedingfield.

have been more particularly excited, at the critical period of the deposition of Louis XVI. and by no means to have relaxed at the time of his execution.—During the whole of the present summer, as has been seen, these principles continued to be diffused with more than usual diligence and activity:—in the fields, at debating societies, in lecture-rooms, in papers, pamphlets, and hand-bills, Kings and kingly government had been holden up to contempt; and the advantages of a Revolution, similar to that of France, enlarged upon with great emphasis, and with little disguise.—At the very first opportunity which offered, the men, whose minds had imbibed these doctrines, attack the King on his way to the Parliament-House; insult him with the watch-words of the Revolutionists;—call out—"*No King!*"—fire into his carriage;—attempt to drag him by force from his chariot; and, being foiled in their endeavour, vent their unsatisfied, disappointed fury on the State-Coach, which they nearly demolished, on its return to the Mews.—Is there any thing in these proceedings which is not perfectly natural, consistent, and regular? Are not cause and consequence as plainly connected, and as clearly discernible, as in any known chain of human events? Was it not natural that men, who had imbibed a hatred for Monarchs and Monarchy, who had been taught to believe that a monarchical government was incompatible with the existence of civil liberty, and who had been led to admire, and to imitate, a people who had brought their Sovereign to the block, should attempt, at once, to gratify their hatred, and to obtain the object of their wishes and pursuits, by the only means by which it could be obtained,—the murder of their King, and the destruction of the constitution? If the personal virtues of a Sovereign could have had any influence on minds infected with the Revolutionary poison, Louis XVI. had never perished by the hands of the executioner; and, therefore, the personal virtues of George the Third,—virtues which adorn the man, and dignify his station,—would operate as no impediment to the perpetration of regicide in England. That murder was intended, when all the circumstances of the case have been duly considered, it would be folly to doubt.—The consideration is dreadful; the mind of an Englishman revolts from the contemplation of such a crime; but the attempt to commit it forms an apt illustration of principles which

will ever be productive of the same effect, wherever they take root, and by whatever means they are brought to flourish.

This outrage, as might be supposed, excited great consternation in the House of Lords. As soon as the King withdrew, the Ministers had a short consultation, as to the proper mode of proceeding on so extraordinary an occasion. It was at length determined to postpone the consideration of the speech from the Throne to the following day; and immediately to form the House into a committee of privileges. This being done, Lord Grenville apprised the Peers of the attack which the King had sustained on his way to the House, from persons who, forgetting the respect and reverence due to their Sovereign, had dared to violate the privilege of Parliament, to disregard its dignity, insult its honour, and to set the laws of their country at defiance. The Earl of Westmoreland, who, as Master of the Horse, and Lord Onslow, who, as Lord of the Bedchamber in waiting, had attended the King, then stated to the House the particulars of the transaction, as they had come within their knowledge. Some witnesses were next examined, who gave an account similar to that above stated, with some additions. It was proved, that, after the Royal carriage had passed the gateway at the Horse Guards, there were frequent exclamations of "*Down with George!—No King!*" and many stones were thrown at the coach by the mob;—and it was also stated, by one of the King's footmen, that when the ball, or whatever it was, which perforated the glass, whizzed by him, he saw *a window open* in a house in the direction whence it proceeded. When all the facts had been thus established, a conference was proposed with the Commons, and a joint address was presented to the King, in which the two Houses avowed their indignation and abhorrence, at the daring outrages which had been offered to his Majesty, on his passage to and from Parliament;—declared, that they could not reflect, without the utmost concern, that there should be found, within his dominions, any persons so insensible of the happiness which all his subjects derived from his just and mild government, and of the virtues which so eminently distinguished the Royal character, as to be capable of such flagitious acts;—and they expressed their earnest wishes, in which they were

confident they should be joined by all descriptions of his Majesty's subjects, that he would be pleased to direct the most effectual measures to be taken, without delay, for discovering the authors and abettors of crimes so atrocious.

The conduct of the King, during the exhibition of this disgraceful scene, was such as all who were acquainted with his Majesty's character, knew it would be,—calm, collected, and dignified.* In compliance with the wishes of the two Houses, a proclamation was immediately issued, offering a large reward for the discovery of the authors of the outrage; and also stating, that, previously to the opening of Parliament, a meeting had been holden in the vicinity of the metropolis, at which inflammatory speeches were delivered, and divers means used to sow discontent, and to excite seditious proceedings; requiring all magistrates, and other well-affected subjects, to exert themselves in preventing and suppressing all unlawful meetings, and the dissemination of seditious writings.†

* His Majesty having, previously to this occurrence, signified his intention of going to the play; it was understood, that her Majesty, and most of the Princesses, alarmed at what had happened, endeavoured to dissuade the King from carrying his design into effect. His Majesty, however, resisted their importunities, and, supported by the *mens conscia recti*, with equal wisdom and fortitude, persevered in his resolution of not concealing himself from his subjects. What passed on this occasion served only to cast a fresh lustre on the Royal character, and to prove his Majesty entitled equally to the esteem, the gratitude, and the confidence, of his subjects.

† It is impossible to quit this momentous subject, without noticing one of the most extraordinary circumstances attending it. In the conversation which followed the proposal for addressing his Majesty, in the manner and terms already stated, the Marquis of Lansdowne is said to have expressed his belief, "that it was no more than a counterpart of their (the "Ministers) own plot; the alarm-bell to terrify the people into weak compliances. He "thought *it was a scheme planned and executed by Ministers themselves*, for the purpose of "continuing their power." *Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports*, *October* 29, 1795. That the spirit of party will often lead men, in the heat of debate, to use expressions alike repugnant to decency, and revolting to common-sense, and to prefer charges which not only have no foundation in fact, but which those, who urge them, know to be false, is a truth, unhappily, but too well established in the political history of most civilized countries. But if ever there were an occasion, on which that spirit should have sunk and disappeared, it was this on which the House were engaged in the contemplation and discussion of one of the most awful, interesting, and momentous concerns, which could fix the attention, and affect the

In the speech from the Throne, the King expressed his satisfaction at the improved situation of public affairs; arising from the measures which had been adopted for preventing the invasion of Italy and Germany, by the French;—the crisis brought about by the prevalence of anarchy at Paris was represented as likely to produce consequences highly important to the interests of Europe. Should that crisis terminate in any order of things compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a reasonable expectation of security and permanence in any treaty which might be concluded, the appearance of a disposition to negotiate for a general peace, on just and suitable terms, would not fail to be met, by the King, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect. The speech notified the treaties of defensive alliance which had been concluded with the two Imperial Courts, and the ratification of a commercial treaty with America.

Though the declaration of his Majesty's readiness to treat for peace was highly satisfactory even to those members who thought, with Mr. Wilberforce, that peace was most desirable, still it was unable to

feelings, of all loyal subjects. Yet, so far was it from producing its natural effect, that it seems to have increased the spirit which it ought to have extinguished; to have raised a resentment, which, mistaking its object, lost every characteristic of loyalty, virtue, and patriotism, and to have betrayed the partisan into the wildest excesses of a frenzied mind. If there were any truth in the accusation here preferred against Ministers, they must have been the basest of traitors, and the foulest of assassins; for they must have employed persons to murder their Sovereign, (and none but an idiot will deny, that the wretch, who fired a bullet into the royal carriage, did not intend to kill the King,) for the purpose of preserving their power. Fortunately, the folly of the charge was alone sufficient to prove its falsehood. For it is not easy to perceive how the power of the Ministers could be preserved by the destruction of their Master, to whose will and approbation they were indebted for the possession of it. On the contrary, there was good reason to believe, that the death of the King would have produced a change in the Royal Councils. But it is horrible to record such flagrant instances of moral and political depravity, in persons whose duty it is to set examples of truth, integrity, and virtue, to their inferiors. Nor could the language here quoted, receive the too frequent palliation of youthful intemperance, as it issued from the lips of one, who, deeply versed in the politics of Machiavel and Price, had passed a long life in Parliamentary conflicts; who could steadily pursue the fixed purpose of his soul, without the dread of interruption from acute feelings, or troublesome passions; and whose warmest expressions were delivered in a cold and measured tone, which plainly indicated that the heart did not always dictate what the tongue uttered.

silence the clamours of Opposition. Mr. Sheridan even deduced from it the extraordinary fact, that the prospect of peace was now more distant than ever. Both he and Mr. Fox dwelt long on the wretched state of the country, in which famine was declared to exist; while the King was surrounded " with starving, dejected, irritated, and clamorous, subjects;"—and " the poor and unhappy people of this country were governed in such a manner as to make almost every man of them feel the misfortune of scarcity and want."* Ministers were censured by Mr. Fox, for imputing all the distresses of the French to the war, while they would not allow those of the English to proceed from the same source. He represented this statement as an absurdity too gross for argument, and which could not be credited without a surrender of the understanding.—Yet nothing was more certain, that the distresses, experienced by the people of the two countries, were imputable to totally different causes. In France, the war was the pretext for placing the whole property and population of the country at the absolute disposal of the government, who, without any regard to consequences, sacrificed every object to the execution of their Revolutionary designs; and, wholly disregarding the interests of trade, commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, tore the trader, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the farmer, from their respective occupations and pursuits; and thus, by diminishing the resources, while they increased the expences, of the state, and dried up the ordinary channels of supply, they produced a general distress. But in England, the distress which prevailed at this time was produced entirely by the failure of the crops in two successive years, which could not, assuredly, be imputed to the war.—In the one case, the war was the operative cause of the distress;—in the other, it had nothing to do with it.—Nothing short, then, of a surrender of the understanding, could render a man blind to the glaring distinction. Mr. Fox concurred in opinion with Mr. Sheridan, that the speech did not " hold out to the impoverished, *oppressed*, and starving people of England, a nearer prospect of the termination of this unfortunate war." They both rejoiced in the destruction of the Bourbons;—and it was stated, that the Ministers had put an atrocious

* Woodfall's Reports, October 29.

falsehood in the mouth of the emigrants, at Quiberon, who had asserted Louis XVIII. to be their lawful King. As this statement could only be founded on the alleged right of the people to dethrone and murder their Sovereign, and to disinherit his lawful heirs, it was probably considered as one of those absurdities which were too gross for argument, as no attempt was made to expose its folly and its falsehood.* After the Opposition had exhausted every topic which could supply food for censure or condemnation;—after they had freely indulged in representations peculiarly calculated to promote the spirit of disaffection, which had just manifested itself in so plain and direct a manner;—Mr. Fox moved an amendment to the address, which had been proposed by Lord Dalkeith, asserting the ability of the French government to maintain the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other nations, and praying his Majesty to give directions to his Ministers, to offer such terms to the French Republic, as would be consistent with the honour of his Majesty's Crown, and with the security and interests of his people.

This amendment was resisted by Mr. Pitt, who considered it as containing a proposition so extraordinary in itself, that he could not believe Mr. Fox was serious in making it.--After observing the supposed state of universal degradation and disappointment, to which we had been reduced in consequence of the war, we were advised, at that moment, to sue for peace, without being informed how the negotiation [redacted] to be conducted, or what indemnity this country was to receive. The amendment, therefore, only held out the mockery of returning to a state of security and peace.—Such were the nature and state of the question which Mr. Fox had submitted to the House; a proposition which, according to the sacred rules of Parliament, any gentleman might bring forward *without personal responsibility*, and, of course,

* Mr. Fox, in the debate, asserted, that the offensive decree, of the 19th of November, 1792, had been formally repealed by Robespierre himself. It has been already shewn, that this was not the fact; and that even the proposal for limiting the application of its anarchical provisions to countries at war with the Republic, was scouted as unworthy even of serious discussion.—Yet it does not appear, from the Parliamentary Reports, that the assertion of Mr. Fox was contradicted by any of the members.

without incurring any threat of impeachment; though a Minister, were he to submit such a proposition to the House, without its previous sanction, would assuredly stand in a very different predicament. Mr. Pitt entered at large, into the grounds on which the satisfaction had been expressed in the speech at the improved state of public affairs.—These, principally, consisted in the reduced means of the enemy for the prosecution of the war; and in that change in their internal state, which afforded a fairer prospect of their being soon placed in a situation to give a reasonable security for fulfilling any terms of peace which might be concluded with them. The assignats had been reduced in value, in the course of the last year, from twenty-five, or twenty, to one and a half per cent.;—that is, that a year before one hundred pounds in assignats produced twenty, or twenty-five, pounds in specie, or goods, whereas now they only produced thirty shillings. The whole amount of assignats, too, was no less than seven hundred and twenty millions sterling. While all the French rulers, financiers, and politicians, concurred in the opinion, that it was necessary to withdraw a great number of them from circulation, and that inevitable ruin would be the consequence of their increase. Metallic pieces had been recently proposed as substitutes for assignats; but if these were to pass for more than their intrinsic value, the only difference would be, that one species of assignats were made of paper, and the other of metal. No means, however, had been yet devised for procuring a sufficiency of metal for the purpose.—A nation, destitute of gold and silver, could only obtain those precious metals in exchange for the productions of their own soil, if any remained for exportation, after the internal consumption had been supplied.—But France was deprived of this resource by the destruction of her trade, commerce, and manufactures. Mr. Pitt shewed the effect which this depreciation of assignats must have on all the operations of government, and particularly on the pay of the troops; whence he deduced the existence of those reduced means of offence which constituted a solid ground of satisfaction.

As to the second ground of satisfaction, the alleged improvement in the internal state of France, he observed, that the French now

universally reprobated that system of oppression under which they had so long groaned.—They also expressed their detestation and abhorrence of that system of government which had met with such enthusiastic applause in this country. The new Constitution had been ushered in with a denunciation of all the other systems of government which had been devised in the course of the Revolution.—They had examined into many of them with a philosophical accuracy; and had investigated the causes of many of those unparalleled horrors from which they had derived many useful lessons. This was the only chance of convincing them that a safe and honourable peace could not be built on any of those baseless theories, which were formerly so much relished in France.—They seemed now to be satisfied that they must renounce their desperate projects, and build a system of peace on more solid and durable grounds.

Such was the change in the internal state of France, which induced Mr. Pitt to think that the period was nearer at hand, at which a secure peace might be concluded with France; and he unequivocally expressed his determination to avail himself of the first favourable opportunity which should occur for the completion of that desirable purpose. He declared, that if the new Constitution of France should meet with the general acquiescence of the nation, he should consider all objections to the form of government entirely removed; and that the question, as to the security of a peace, would then depend only on the terms. But should peace be the consequence of this state of things, he frankly acknowledged that he should regret that the efforts, and resources, of the principal nations of Europe, contending against a country in a temporary delirium, and exposing others to destruction, had not been more vigorously and effectually employed, for the purpose of restoring social order, exiled law, morality, and religion. But being under the necessity of submitting to these things which he could not control, he was disposed to look with gratitude to the many favourable circumstances which then existed. If we were but true to ourselves, much might yet be done for the honour and security of the country. Much had been done to destroy those destructive principles that had so long prevailed in France and laid waste that fine

country. The resources of a brave and free people, living under a mild and well-regulated government, and supported by individual industry, were infinite. They had enabled us to defray the heavy expences of the war in which we were engaged, while France had been living on the capital of the country. After the payment of our taxes, though, in some degree, burthensome, every man in this island could say, his personal safety, his personal liberty, and his private property, were secure, under the protection of the law. Mr. Pitt repelled the charges preferred against himself and his colleagues, and reprobated the inflammatory language which had been used during the discussion.—The address was carried by a great majority, there appearing, on the division, only fifty-nine votes against it. Mr. Wilberforce declared himself perfectly satisfied with it.

The first legislative measure now submitted to the cognizance of Parliament, related to a subject which was uppermost in every man's mind, at this conjuncture—the late attack on the person of the King. It was not to be supposed, that the Minister would remain satisfied with the proclamations which had been issued, offering a reward for the apprehension of the culprits, and stimulating the vigilance of the magistrates, in the suppression of seditious meetings, without the adoption of some efficacious means for the prevention of similar attempts, or for ensuring the punishment of the offenders, in case they should be made. It was with this view that a bill, "for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and government, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," was brought in by Lord Grenville, early in November. And another bill, "for the effectually preventing of seditious meetings and assemblies," was brought in by Mr. Pitt himself. These bills were acknowledged to be founded on the proclamations already issued. In introducing the first of these to the House of Lords, Lord Grenville observed, that it was notorious, that the evil which the bill aimed to correct, had reached to such an height and extent, that not only seditious papers were printed and diffused, but meetings were publicly advertised and holden, at which discourses were delivered of a seditious nature, calculated to mislead the minds, confound the judgment, and influence the passions, of the

multitude, industriously collected to hear them. To that, clearly and undeniably, was to be ascribed the outrage which had recently been committed. It was no longer the flimsy pretence of some imaginary grievance, no longer the slight pretext of a wish for a Parliamentary Reform, that could be alleged and avowed as the motive for such meetings, and for such conduct. That thin veil had been lately torn away, and, in the face of broad day, an attempt had been made, directly, on the person of the Sovereign. Every man must admit, that more effective measures had been thus rendered necessary for the prevention of a return of similar outrages; and his Lordship ascribed that attack to the toleration of those licentious proceedings which had recently been witnessed in the vicinity of the metropolis. Indeed the treasonable and seditious speeches, which had of late, been so insidiously disseminated, at public meetings, together with the number of libels otherwise circulated, were so general, and so notorious, that they most particularly called for the interference of Parliament. It was the bounden duty of the Ministers to endeavour to check their flagitious tendency; and their first care had been to turn to the laws of the country, and to the history of Parliament, in order to ascertain what precedents existed applicable to the occasion, and how our ancestors had conducted themselves under similar circumstances;—such precedents had been found, and the bill now introduced was grounded on them; and, indeed, was, in a great measure, copied from two acts, one passed in the reign of Elizabeth, and the other in that of Charles the Second.

On the introduction of the second bill, to the House of Commons, Mr. Pitt observed, that the public had seen, with becoming indignation, that a virtuous and beloved Sovereign had been attacked in the most criminal and outrageous manner, and at a time, too, when he was in the exercise of the greatest and most important functions of kingly capacity, when he was going to assemble the great council of the nation,—that great, and, indeed, only, resource against every national evil. The first sensations of every man's mind, so immediately directed against the life of the King of these realms, must be those of horror and detestation of the wicked, the diabolical wretches, who,

in contempt of the respect and reverence due to the sacred character of their Sovereign, in contempt of the whole legislature, by a kind of concentrated malice, directed a blow, at once, at its three branches, in attempting to assassinate a mild and benignant Monarch, who was the great cement and centre of our glorious constitution. In contemplating this calamity, it would be felt, that some correction must be given to the laws at present in force against such crimes; means must be found to repress the spirit which gave birth to so daring an outrage, and to prevent such unprecedented consequences of sedition, and of sedition, too, leading to assassination, by the most despicable, as well as the most dangerous, of all modes of attack, against the vital principles of the State, in the person of the Sovereign.

If, under this first impression, every man should think himself called upon, by the loyalty and allegiance which he owed to the Sovereign office, by the reverence due to religion, by self-preservation, and the happiness of society at large, to apply a remedy to these very alarming symptoms, another impression would arise out of it, equally forcible, and equally obvious; namely, that the House would do this business but by halves, and act carelessly and ineffectually, if they directed their attention only to that separate act, and not to those mischievous and formidable circumstances which were connected with it, in point of principles, and which produced it, in point of fact.

Mr. Pitt declared, that, in pointing out to the House such a remedy as, in his mind, would be efficient, he should not be governed by legal distinctions, but by prudential principles. If the House viewed the separate act with that eye of horror which he conceived they must; and, if so viewing it, they felt the conviction, that means should immediately be adopted for preventing a repetition of such enormities, the next point which would press upon their minds, as arising out of the two former, was, that some measure should be devised for putting a stop to those seditious assemblies, which served as vehicles of faction and disloyalty,—which fanned, and kept alive, the flame of disaffection, and filled the minds of the people with discontent. He had the most indubitable proof to support him in the assertion, that this sen-

timent pervaded, not only that House, but the whole kingdom; and that in no one instance which had ever occurred, were the Commons called upon more loudly, by the wishes and prayers of an anxious community, than they were at this time, by the whole people of England, to avert the ruin with which these assemblies menaced the country, by preventing their farther proceedings.

He then adverted to the bill for the protection of the Royal Person, brought into the other House by Lord Grenville, and proceeded to state, that the meetings to which he alluded were of two descriptions; under the first of which fell those meetings which, under a pretext (to which they by no means adhered) of petitioning Parliament for rights, of which they affected to be deprived, agitated questions, and promulgated opinions and insinuations, hostile to the existing government, and tending to bring it into disrepute with the people. The other descriptions, though less numerous, not less public nor less dangerous, were concerted, evidently, for the purpose of disseminating unjust grounds of jealousy, discontent, and false complaints, against the constitution,—of irritating the minds of the people against their lawful governors, and of encouraging them to the commission of acts even of treason itself. In these meetings, every thing which could create faction, every thing which could excite discontent, every thing which could prepare the minds of those who attended for rebellion, was industriously circulated. Both these descriptions of meetings required some strong law for their suppression; for if the arm of the executive government was not strengthened by such a law, they would be continued, if not to the utter ruin, certainly to the indelible disgrace, of the country.

As to the first description, no one would venture to deny the right of the people to express their opinions on political men and measures, and to discuss and assert their right of petitioning all the branches of the legislature; nor was there any man who would be further from encroaching on that right than Mr. Pitt himself. It was undoubtedly a most valuable privilege, of which nothing should deprive them. But, on the other hand, if meetings of this kind were made the mere cover, or the pretext, for acts which were as inconsistent with the

liberty of the subject, as it was possible to imagine any thing to be; if, instead of stating grievances, the people were excited to rebellion; if, instead of favouring the principles of freedom, the very foundation of it was to be destroyed, and with it the happiness of the people, it was high time for the legislature to interpose with its authority.

In the application of the desired remedy, two things were to be considered;—the first, to correct the abuse of a sacred and invaluable privilege; the second, to preserve that privilege inviolate.—Caution was, therefore, necessary, lest, on the one hand, the rights of the people should be encroached on; or, on the other, the abuse of those rights should be suffered to become the instrument of their total extinction. This was justly considered as a matter of great delicacy; —but the real question was, did not the pressure of the moment render some remedy necessary?

A more clear and defined power, in the magistrate, was evidently wanting to disperse, and put an end to, all meetings likely to be productive of such consequences as had been noticed. It was by no means intended, Mr. Pitt said, to apply this power of dispersion to meetings professedly, and obviously, lawful, and held for legal and constitutional purposes; but that, in every case of a numerous meeting of whatever nature, or under whatever colour, notice should be given, so as to enable the magistrate to keep a watchful eye over their proceedings. The object of this notice was to enforce the attendance of the magistrate, for the preservation of the public peace, for preventing any measure which might tend to attack, or to bring into contempt, either the Sovereign himself, or any branch of the established government of the country. The magistrate was to be empowered to apprehend any persons whose conduct should seem calculated for those purposes; and any resistance to a magistrate, so acting, was to be deemed felony in every person concerned in it. On perceiving the proceedings of such meeting to be tumultuous, and leading to bad consequences of the nature described, the magistrate would have power, similar to that which the riot-act already conferred on him, to disperse that assembly; and, after reading the riot-act, and ordering them to

disperse, any number of persons remaining, would, as by the riot-act, incur the penalty of the law—felony. This summary power, proposed to be vested in the magistrate, would still leave to the people the fair right to petition on the one hand, but would, on the other prevent the abuse of it.

Of the other description of meetings to be subjected to legislative restrictions, were public lectures, delivered by men who made the dissemination of sedition the means of subsistence. To them Mr. Pitt proposed to apply regulations something like those which had passed about fourteen years before, in an act, called *Mansfield's* Act, by which all houses wherein meetings of an improper kind were holden on a Sunday, were to be considered, and treated, as *disorderly houses.* Such were the outlines of the proposed bill, as stated by Mr. Pitt, when he moved the House for leave to bring it in.

These bills, in their progress through the two Houses, gave rise to some of the most animated debates, and to the promulgation of some of the most extraordinary and most mischievous sentiments which Parliament had witnessed for a series of years. The most violent opposers of them were Messrs. Fox, Grey, and Sheridan, all of whom made no scruple to declare their firm conviction, that there was no danger whatever to be dreaded from the numerous societies, now in existence; and denied, in the most explicit terms, all connection between the proceedings of those societies, and of the tumultuous meetings which had been recently holden in the fields near the metropolis, and the late attempt to murder the King in his way to Parliament.—They even went so far as to support the monstrous assertion of a Peer, already noticed, that Ministers themselves were the authors of that diabolical attempt. At one time, it was ascribed to persons actually employed by Ministers; at other times to their "disbanded spies;"*—in short, to any thing but its true cause. Another of them had the boldness to call the whole body of Ministers traitors, in language too plain to be misunderstood by the least acute persons

* Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 10, 1795, p. 195.—Mr. Sheridan's Speech.

who heard it, though purposely so guarded as to escape the punishment which it richly deserved. It was urged by Ministers, said this decorous senator, that there were not only discontented men, but traitors, in the country, who sought, in the most daring manner, to destroy the constitution;—that there were such wretches, he would readily admit; wretches of the most base and abominable kind; traitors who strove, by the most atrocious means, to subvert the constitution; he would not name who those traitors were, nor in what situations they were placed, but he was convinced that, if suffered to proceed in their iniquitous plans, they would inevitably produce the dreadful effects which were so much *affected* to be apprehended from popular meetings, and private clubs.* Such language was highly unbecoming a member of the House of Commons, who, if he had reason to believe the Ministers to be traitors, was bound, as an honest man, and an upright representative, openly and directly to state such reason to the House and manfully to support the charge. To skulk beneath an ambiguous expression, and indirectly to assert what he did not dare fairly to state, was mean and pusillanimous. He further declared, that he could not conceive any connection between the meeting at Copenhagen-House and the outrage which had been committed on his Majesty's person; so far from it, he would rather incur the imputation of acting with those men to whom Ministers alluded, than suffer the motion made that night to pass without his most marked disapprobation; considering it, as he did, as *an attempt to rob the people of their dearest rights, and enslave the nation.*

On the other hand, it was contended, that there was an intimate connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-House, and the disgraceful outrage which followed; and that this was so obvious, that it was wonderful any man, possessed of the common powers of reasoning, should doubt it. An attempt had been made against the King, and a doctrine was preached on the practice of "King-killing." The doctrine was preached, and the attempt was made. The designs of

* Woodfall's Reports, p. 198.—Mr. Grey's Speech.

the speakers were not disguised; they publicly declaimed against his Majesty and government.*

The same argument was pressed with great force by the Attorney-General, who produced a number of libels, printed by a "Citizen Lee," and circulated at the meetings of the societies, which it was the object of one of the bills to suppress. The first of these was entitled, "A Summary of Citizenship;" which described the Tyrants of England to consist of various classes, such as Priests, Soldiers, and Lawyers; priests were stated to be the preachers and supporters of tyranny and monarchy; and which declared, that the Monarch winked at clerical peculation.—The books of Moses and Christ were asserted not to have been written by the authors whose names they bore, but fabricated by the propagators and supporters of despotism. This work was to be printed expressly for the edification and instruction of society. Another book produced, was called, "A Summary of the Rights of Kings;" and was printed by the same citizen, at the Tree of Liberty. It set forth, in general, that the curse of God to man was kingly government;† that the lower orders were sacrificed to Monarchy; and that the poor, luckless inhabitants of this country, were half-starved and emaciated. The expressions it contained against the King, were so gross, so base, and so scandalous, that decency forbade to mention them. Every body knew that there were people now who lived by libels; it had become a trade. People went into a shop not to buy a single libel, but into a shop full of nothing but libels. It was not unusual, also, in different parts of the town, to see the wares of useful trades exposed to sale on one side of a shop, and libels on the other; they appeared to be multiplied for the purpose of rendering prosecution more difficult, and so baffling the law.‡

The Attorney-General declared, that, without the aid of these bills,

* Mr. Canning's Speech, Nov. 16.—Woodfall's Reports, p. 225.

† The text for this precious dissertation was supplied by Earl Stanhope, in one of his speeches in the Upper House.

‡ Attorney-General's Speech, Nov. 16.—Ibid, p. 288.

it would be impracticable to put a stop to such flagitious proceedings. He observed, that, in the years 1791 and 1792, the object of the societies was, clearly and distinctly, universal suffrage, which was equivalent to no King.—They addressed the Jacobin societies in France to that effect; and received for answer, from the regicides of that country, that they hoped that England would soon have a National Convention; and that they should be soon employed in transmitting, to the soldiers of England, weapons, and pikes, and caps of liberty. Let the language and conduct of the meetings at Sheffield, Wakefield, and Chalk-Farm, be duly weighed. They did not say they would petition Parliament; but called their legislators, their plunderers, their enemies, and oppressors, meaning the three branches of the legislature. If these circumstances were considered, the necessity of such a law as that now proposed would be manifest. If the societies and meetings were suffered to proceed, the business of the country could not go on. The libels and doctrines circulated at St. George's Fields, at Chalk-Farm, at the Globe Tavern, and Copenhagen-House, were sufficient to inflame and irritate the minds of the people so as to prevent them from properly estimating the blessings which they enjoyed under a free government.

It was not left to Ministers alone to defend these bills, and to expose the futility and falsehood of many of the assertions of Opposition; several of the most respectable of that worthy class of members, distinguished by the appellation of *Country Gentlemen*, stood forward upon this occasion. Sir Francis Basset, in particular, advanced arguments and facts, which no asseverations could shake, and no sophistry could confute. In order to prove the connection between the meeting at Copenhagen-House, immediately before Parliament was assembled, and the attack on the King, he quoted the following expression which had been used at that place: "His gracious Majesty is to meet *his* Parliament on Thursday next, and I hope that you will give him a warm reception!"—Would any man of common sense pretend that this expression was to be understood as applying to the applause which arose from attachment, or zeal, for his service? Was it not obviously for the purpose of contumely? Upon the real intent of it, no man living

could doubt a single moment. Reference was made, by this worthy Baronet, to the manner and time of passing the riot-act, which vested great power in the magistrates. It passed without inquiry, at a period when there were individuals in the kingdom who wished to remove the King from the Throne, and to place another upon it. Yet the danger then dreaded was most truly stated to be nothing when compared with the existing danger. Had the family of Stuart been placed upon the Throne, the whole of the constitution would not have been destroyed; the property of every individual would not have been seized; personal distinctions would not have been sacrificed; and some security would have remained for the preservation of the form of our government. If, however, the persons who *now* strove against government should succeed, there would be an end, at once, to the very form of our constitution. The mischiefs of those clubs, which it was the object of the bill to suppress, had struck Sir Francis Basset, as well as many other country gentlemen, so forcibly, that they thought the Minister extremely remiss in not having brought some such measure as the present forward, long before that time, for the consideration of Parliament. He stated one of the questions lately submitted for discussion, at one of the debating societies, to have been—"Whether the People ought to be in a state of Rebellion, in consequence of a Convention Bill passed by Parliament?" These persons must allow Parliament to be either a legal or an illegal assembly; if legal, they ought to exercise their authority over such daring debates; if illegal, there was an end at once of all their authority. If similar discussions were allowed, he ventured to assert, that the constitution of this country would not last a twelvemonth.*

The assertion of Sir Francis Basset, that a Revolution which would have placed a Monarch of the House of Stuart on the Throne, would not be so fatal to English liberty, as a Revolution on French principles, roused the indignation of the great panegyrist of the French Revolution, who declared it to be jacobitism in perfection. What, he asked, would the House of Stuart have done, had they been established on the Throne?

* Sir Francis Basset's Speech, in Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 16th, p. 303.

*They would have introduced the Catholic Religion, instead of the Protestant.** They would, *perhaps*, have put an end to Parliament, restrained the rights of Juries, and subverted the Liberty of the Press. But, admitting that they would have done all this, which is not at all probable, (except the introduction of Popery,) would not a French Revolution have done much more? It would have destroyed all religion, all justice, all laws, all morals, and all property.

The arguments of Sir Francis Basset were principally supported by Lord Mornington, who took a most able and comprehensive view of the subject. He shewed, that the seditious societies had again held their meetings, and developed their designs, in publications of the most dangerous tendency. In one of these they stated, "that they had suffered a storm; that their vessel was endangered, but now had put to sea with greater prospect of success than ever; that they had the satisfaction to see their principles actively propagating among their countrymen; and that their numbers multiplied at the rate of one hundred and fifty new members in a week; and sometimes seventy or eighty in a day." It seemed as if the whole of the British nation were convened on this extraordinary occasion; for, upon their own declaration, they had renewed their system, and increased the means of propagating their doctrines. They had told the people what they were to expect from inertness, and what from supplication; and exclaimed, "How long, Oh, foolish countrymen, will you call upon Hercules?" —An exclamation, the meaning of which was too obvious to require explanation.

Though the French Revolutionists were objects of admiration to these societies, the late conduct of the Gallic Patriots, in modifying their democratical principles, and still more, no doubt, in giving a death blow to all *corresponding* and *affiliated* societies, had highly offended their fellow-labourers in this country. For they were now accused of having, in their new constitution, adopted an imperfect

* Mr. Fox's Speech, in Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 17th, p. 355. And yet Mr. Fox has since insisted, that the restoration of the Roman Catholic religion constituted no part of their plan who wished to restore James the Second to the Throne!

system, by abandoning the principle of equality, by rendering property a necessary qualification in electors, and in giving up the right of universal suffrage. The societies, for the better execution of their plan, affected to adopt a pacific system, declaring, "That they did not mean to demand rights with arms, but by certain measures, of such a nature that the House of Commons *must* accede to them; and that if any despaired of obtaining a reform, and looked for that to riot, they would tell them, that it was not riot that could bring about a REVOLUTION, which *every one must wish for*." This pacific system, however, was only to be continued, provided the Parliament would voluntarily submit to the absurd and extravagant doctrines of universal suffrage, and annual Parliaments, which was neither more nor less, than a surrender of the constitution. The ignorance of the lower classes of the people they considered as the grand prop of the constitution, since it led them to cherish those artificial distinctions, without which it could not subsist. It was, therefore, proposed to remove this ignorance by the wide circulation of cheap publications among them, the expences of which were to be defrayed from the revenue of the societies. In this notable scheme, for the illumination of ignorant subjects, with the patriotic view of converting them into enlightened rebels, three societies were more particularly engaged;—the London Corresponding Society, the Society of the Friends of Liberty, and the London Reforming Society. From books sold by the printers and booksellers of these societies, specially recommended by them as *patriot booksellers*, in whose hands, too, the petition of the meeting at Copenhagen-House was left, for the purpose of receiving signatures, Lord Mornington quoted several passages, in corroboration of his arguments. The object of these books was to excite the poor to seize the landed property of the kingdom; to stir up the soldiery to mutiny; to degrade and debase the naval and military characters; to stigmatize every naval and military success as a misfortune; to represent the administration of justice as corrupt from its very source, and the judges as venal, and influenced by the King and his Ministers; to mark the nobility as a degraded race, and to invite the people to hurl them from their seats; to hold up monarchy as a burden, and hereditary monarchy as useless, absurd, and founded on false principles; and to

take every opportunity of ridiculing the person of our Sovereign with the most immoderate licentiousness; to recommend regicide; to blaspheme the Scriptures, and revile religion, as accessaries to the system which they condemned as ruinous, oppressive, and corrupt; and, lastly, to decry the established church and constitution, till they had brought the people to that pitch of frantic rage, that would inevitably end in their pulling down the pillar of the State, and burying the whole fabric in one undistinguishable mass of ruins.

In one of the pamphlets, read in support of these assertions, it was observed, " that the landed property of the country was originally got by conquest, or by encroachment on the property of the people; and, as those *public robbers*, who had so obtained its possession, had shewn no moderation in the use of it, it would not be fit to neglect the precious opportunity of recovering their rights. A few hearty fellows, with arms, &c. might take possession of the whole; a particular committee be appointed to receive it; all the possessors be called upon to deliver up to that committee, their writings and documents, in order to be burned; and the owners be made to disgorge the last payment of their tenants, in order to form a fund for *good* citizens; and, if the aristocracy rose in resistance, let the people be firm, and dispatch them, cutting off root and branch." This simple proposal, for adopting the Parisian mode of acquiring wealth, was published by a bookseller and printer, at whose house the Copenhagen-House petition lay for signatures.

Another of these patriotic productions contained a definition of a guillotine,—" An instrument of rare invention. As it is the custom to decapitate, and not hang Kings, it is proper to have this instrument ready, to make death easy to them, supposing a necessity of cutting them off.—This instrument is used only for great malefactors, such as Kings, Bishops, and Prime Ministers. England and France have had their regular turns in executing their Kings;—France did it last," &c. —The pamphlet in which was displayed this kind and considerate regard for the ease of Sovereigns, in their last moments, and in which *Ankerstroem* and *Damiens*, the Swedish and French regicides, were

held up to the reverence of mankind, was also published by one of the *patriotic printers*, Citizen Lee, recommended by the societies.

It was maintained, by Lord Mornington, and with great truth, that this language proceeded from the heart of as foul a traitor as ever raised the dagger of a parricide. It was not even English treason;—it was all French.—It resembled more the bloody page of Marat, or the sanguinary code of Robespierre, than the production of an Englishman. His Lordship unequivocally stated, on his own knowledge, that one production, entitled *King-killing*, and another called *The Reign of George the Last*, were sold at Copenhagen-House. Under such impressions as these did the persons assembled go there to discuss political subjects. There the present scarcity was attributed not to the failure of crops, but to parliamentary corruption. The people were taught, that they had no hope left from legislative or executive powers, but that they were to look to themselves alone, since they could expect no redress from the constituted authorities. It was under these circumstances, and at this crisis, that the attack was made upon the King; and while the nation was in consternation and horror at the event, a printer had the audacity to publish a libel, in which the whole of the facts were misrepresented, with a view to excite the ridicule and contempt of the people.*

To these arguments and facts, which carried conviction to every mind which the torpedo of party had not benumbed, Mr. Sheridan opposed nothing but senseless ridicule, misplaced irony, and bold assertions. Aware of the impression which such proofs as Lord Mornington had exhibited must produce upon the House, and utterly unable to invalidate them, he descended to a most unworthy subterfuge, and *denied* what he could not *controvert*. He did not hesitate to say, in answer to those who quoted paragraphs, pamphlets, and hand-bills, that "he paid no credit to their assertions, and *was resolved to give none;* and if he were to single out any person from the crowd

* Lord Mornington's Speech, of November the 17th.—Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, p. p. 332—339.

(without the insinuation of a personal affront) he should declare that the noble Lord was the least entitled to his credit." *

However indecorous this alleged incredulity might be, it was highly politic. He treated the apprehensions of evil effects from the Revolutionary proceedings of the day with derision and contempt. The arguments which Lord Mornington had made use of, to prove the connection between the proceedings of the London Corresponding Society, and the *accidental* outrage which had been offerred to the person of the Sovereign, neither dazzled his sight, nor satisfied his understanding.—In fact, he did not believe there was any more connection between the two, than between the noble Lord's speech and the question in debate.

It was as little compatible with the dignity of a national council, as it was consistent with common sense, to talk of an *accidental* attempt to murder the King! That *accident*, in the same spirit, Mr. Sheridan ascribed to the pressure of distress; and, with a kind of Revolutionary logic, observed, "Other riots, other tumults, other insurrections, had been frequent in almost every county throughout England; and his Majesty's troops had *often* been called upon to shed the blood of his Majesty's subjects, who had been guilty of riot and disturbance, *on account of the distress and famine arising from the war!*† thus crowding into a single sentence, as many false assertions, and inflammatory

* Lord Mornington's Speech in Woodfall's Reports, ibid. p. 340.

† Woodfall's Reports, November 17, p. 342.—The whole of this speech was nearly as inflammatory as any of the speeches at Copenhagen-House, and not more argumentative. It was altogether unworthy a man of Mr. Sheridan's abilities; it was throughout a paltry attempt to flatter the populace; and, in many respects, a mere echo of the declamatory harangues of the political field-preachers.—Towards the close of it, he told the House,—"They should consider that they were all of them the *servants of the people of England.*—They voted and acted in that House not in their individual capacity, but as *agents and attorneys* for others;" and yet he could talk of a *libel* upon the Constitution, and upon the House of Commons! "The conduct of the Societies," which preached treason and sedition, "he considered himself bound to defend, *because* the societies were the objects of general obloquy and clamour." By the same rule, he ought to have defended the conduct of Damiens, Robespierre, and Ankerstroem!

insinuations, as were ever compressed, by the most ingenious Revolutionist, in so small a space.

In the course of these discussions every epithet expressive of abuse, which the language could supply, without descending to the vocabulary of Billingsgate, was exhausted by the Opposition, on the bills before the House, and on the Ministers and members by whom they were supported. Every attempt was made to excite the people to rise, in order to prevent the bills from passing, by intimidating Parliament, and to stimulate them to resist their execution when passed, *which could only be done by open revolt, and acts of rebellion.*

In the debate of the 17th of November, Mr. Fox, after representing the bill for the suppression of seditious meetings as absolutely destructive of the very basis of the constitution, declared, that, should it pass, *it would cost him but little anxiety, that a spirit of resistance was found impossible to be suppressed.* He believed a spirit of discontent to be pretty general in the country at present; and he had no hesitation in saying, that it originated in a bad government, in wicked and ruinous measures, and in the blind and unmeaning confidence which the people had too long reposed in an unfortunate and desperate administration.*

Here a resistance, not to be controled by the laws, was evidently anticipated, with any thing but regret; and a justifiable motive, in the estimation of the speaker, assigned for its existence. Six days after, he recurred to the same subject, and said, that if the bills were to pass, and *his opinion were asked by the people, as to their obedience, he should say that it was no longer a question of morality or duty, but of prudence.* It would, indeed, be a case of extremity alone which could justify resistance, and *the only question would be, whether that resistance were prudent?*—And this sentiment, which was as clear and direct an exhortation to rebellion as words could convey, he declared to be the result of *deliberation.*†

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports for 1795, November 17, p. 348.

† Idem, ibid. November 23, p. 454.

That such was the impression made on the minds of the House, at the time the speech was delivered, is evident from the observations of Mr. Pitt, who immediately rose and declared, that, consistently with his duty, as a member of Parliament, with his feelings as a man, with his attachment to his Sovereign, and his veneration for the constitution, he could not hear such sentiments avowed, without rising instantly to express his horror and indignation at them. Mr. Fox had made a bold, broad, and unqualified declaration, that, if his arguments and his measures did not prevent the passing of bills which a great majority of the House conceived to be necessary for the security of the person of the Sovereign, and the preservation of the rights of the people, he would have recourse to different means of opposition. He had avowed his intention of setting up his own arguments in opposition to the authority of the legislature. He had said, that if his advice were asked, he would put the propriety of resistance only on the question of prudence, without considering whether the consequences of this advice might be followed by the penalties of treason, and the danger of convulsion, thus openly advising an appeal to the sword, which must either consign its authors to the vengeance of the violated law, or involve the country in anarchy and bloodshed. Mr. Fox had taken care not to be misstated;—happily for the country, this declaration of his principles was too clear to admit of a doubt. Mr. Pitt was glad that he had been so unreserved and explicit. The House and the country would judge of his conduct from his own language; they might see the extent of his veneration for the constitution, and of his respect for Parliament, when, in violation of his duty, in defiance of legal punishment, he could bring himself to utter such sentiments. Mr. Pitt was glad that he had made that avowal, because he hoped it would warn all the true friends of the constitution to rally round it for its defence. He would not enter into a discussion of the abstract right of resistance, or what degree of oppression, on the part of the government, would set the people free from their allegiance; he would only remind the House that the principles of those bills, to which such language had been applied, had met with the approbation of a large majority, and he trusted that majority had not forgotten what was due to themselves and their country. He hoped they would convince

Mr. Fox that they had not lost the spirit of their ancestors, to which such frequent reference had been made; and that, if they were driven by treason, to the hard necessity of defending the constitution by force, they would act with that irresistible energy which such a crime would necessarily excite in a loyal assembly. The power of the law of England, he trusted, would be sufficient to defeat the machinations of all who risqued such dangerous doctrines, and to punish treason wherever it might be found. Should the law fail, all the true friends to the constitution must fight under its banner, and display as much vigour in a good cause as desperate men might exert in a bad one. They must hazard, if necessary, their lives, their fortunes, and every thing held dear, to rescue, themselves from that anarchy, that wretchedness, into which such unremitting efforts were made to plunge the country.*

This strong, but just, comment on Mr. Fox's speech, led that gentleman to re-state his expression.—His, he pronounced to be the sentiments for which our forefathers shed their blood, and upon which the Revolution was founded. But, that he might not be mistaken, he said, that the case he put was, that these bills might be passed by a corrupt majority of Parliament, contrary to the opinion and sentiments of the great body of the nation. If the majority of the people approved of these bills, he would not be the person to inflame their minds, and stir them up to rebellion; but if, in the general opinion of the country, it was conceived, that these bills attacked the fundamental principles of our constitution, he then maintained, that the propriety of resistance, instead of remaining any longer a question of morality, would become merely a question of prudence. He might be told that these were strong words; but strong measures required strong words. He would not submit to arbitrary power, while there remained any alternative to vindicate his freedom.†

This explanation served only to fix Mr. Fox's meaning as it was before expressed.—If the majority of the people were adverse to the

* Woodfall's Reports, November 23, 1795, p. 455, 457.
† Idem, ibid. p. 467.

bills, and should conceive them to attack the fundamental principles of the constitution, then, should they pass, they would be justified, in his opinion, in having recourse to a rebellion;—and it would be the duty of a good patriot, under such circumstances, to stir them up to rebellion; unless, indeed, he should be restrained by mere prudential considerations, arising out of their comparative strength with that of the government, and the consequent probability of success in their attempts to overthrow it.

Throughout the whole of this discussion, Mr. Fox and his associates reprobated these bills as most wicked and atrocious, as subversive of the liberty of the press, as a blow aimed at the outworks of the constitution; neither more nor less than a daring attempt to subvert its very foundation, and the freedom of discussion. Upon the liberty of the press the basis of the constitution was known to rest;—take this away, and the whole fabric must fall.* All his arguments, all his conclusions, went to prove, not only that the bills did attack the fundamental principles of the constitution, but that the majority of the people were convinced that they did so.† This was the language of the whole party, when they addressed the people at the popular meetings which were holden in different places, for the consideration of the question; or when they expatiated in Parliament on the numerous petitions which were presented against the bills. And, therefore, it was the obvious and necessary inference, that, in Mr. Fox's opinion, the moment the bills passed into laws, the people would be justified in rising in rebellion against them. Such were *not* the sentiments of our ancestors, who brought about the Revolution of 1688; nor the principle on which that Revolution was founded. The patriots of that day were too wise to discuss the abstract right of resistance; to

* See Woodfall's Reports, November 17, p. 358.

† In the very last debate on the subject, Mr. Fox thus expressed himself:—"I believe it (the bill) to be, in the true sense of the phrase, *as clearly against the general sense of the people of the country*, and as entirely unpopular, as any measure that has ever been brought before Parliament."—And again,—"Nothing gives me more pleasure and satisfaction than to feel, that *a vast majority of the people of England agree with me in this daring attack on our constitution.*"—Woodfall's Reports, Dec. 3, p. 202, 203.

investigate, or attempt to ascertain, the causes which would justify rebellion; or to reason on a supposed majority of the people as opposed to a known and decisive majority of their representatives. They wisely contented themselves with the application of an adequate remedy to an existing evil, and with providing for the immediate exigency, which called for their interference, though possibly not in the most regular, nor most unobjectionable, manner. The acknowledged basis of the whole proceeding, however, as far as related to the established interruption of the regular line of succession, was the *King's abdication of the Throne.* There is an essential difference between an unnecessary discussion of the abstract right of resistance, with a view to shew what acts of government will justify a rebellion, and the actual recourse to resistance at a crisis which admits of no other remedy, and which, therefore, can neither be foreseen nor provided against.

It was justly remarked by Mr. Windham, that Mr. Fox's explanation took nothing from the dangerous tendency of his original declaration, the meaning of which was obviously the same which had been assigned to it by Mr. Pitt.—It was, that Mr. Fox would advise the people, whenever they were strong enough, to resist the execution of the law. He rested on no majority, but *the majority of force.* He had brought the matter to a crisis, and it was now verging to that point to which, in the opinion of Mr. Windham, it had long tended. It was alarming to the country, but they must look at it;—the danger ought to be known to them; and if they did not see the dreadful precipice, near which they stood, in his apprehension they were lost for ever.—At least, they had a fair warning; they now knew, from the unequivocal declarations of Mr. Fox, what lengths would be justified; they had time to prepare against the danger, and to provide for their safety; but he would not wish for a dishonourable safety; not a safety gained by flight and pusillanimity; he would have them, in manly fortitude, meet the danger. In that case, Mr. Fox would find that Ministers were determined to exert a vigour beyond the law, as exercised in ordinary times, and under common circumstances. Times and circumstances would then require stronger laws, and the exertion of more efficacious means

for putting these laws in execution. He deprecated the idea of *an abject mind* as much as Mr. Fox; and therefore it was that Ministers, whatever strength and daring were opposed to them, would be able, he trusted, to meet it with an equal degree of strength and combination.

It has been observed, that the principal associates of Mr. Fox joined him in enforcing this doctrine of resistance. In the debate of the twenty-third of November, Mr. Sturt, who had presented a petition against the bills, *from the London Corresponding Society*, speaking in vindication of his *Clients*, (for, according to his friend, Mr. Sheridan's definition of the representative character, he was one of the *Attorneys* of the people,) said,—"These people are friends to a Parliamentary reform; and they apprehend, that if the Parliament does not accomplish that reform, *a revolution will effect it;* and so do I; nay, I will go further, perhaps, *I think a revolution better of the two!*"* It does not appear, by the Parliamentary Reports, that this man was called to order by the House; perhaps the Speaker was of opinion, that the ignorance of the declaration was so much greater than its profligacy, as to render silent contempt the most proper mark of disapprobation. In the same debate, Mr. Sheridan insisted that, if the bills should pass, the people would be *slaves;* and, if they were to ask him how they were to act, if those bills passed by corrupt majorities, (and, if they passed at all, they could only pass by majorities which he would consider as corrupt,) he should tell them, *they ought to resist whenever they could prudently do it!* As men of spirit could they act otherwise? The people would say, "You, by your language in that House, have *inflamed* us, and now you do not dare to pursue the measures you there maintained."† Here was a clear and explicit avowal, that the language of the Opposition was calculated to inflame the minds of the people, and to rouse them to acts of rebellion!

Mr. Grey, at the same time, declared, with great boldness, that he would not shrink from the principle advanced by Mr. Fox; and he would repeat with him, that if, by the government of the country,

* Woodfall's Reports, November 23, p. 410. † Idem, ibid p. 449.

measures were carried into effect, contrary to the wishes of a great majority of the people, (not to be ascertained by the voice of their representatives in Parliament,) to the liberties of the nation, (of which he himself was to be the judge,) if he should be asked, whether the people ought to refrain from resistance, he would say that they should only be induced to refrain from motives of prudence.*

When such open exhortations to resistance as these were used in Parliament, and such attempts were made to justify them, on the principles of the Revolution, well might Mr. Pitt exclaim—"The charge I urge against the gentlemen in opposition to these bills is, first, that the means they make use of for spreading an alarm, is, misrepresentation; and, secondly, that this alarming of the people is attempted for the express purpose of rousing them, if practicable, to a spirit of resistance against the legislature, with a view to overthrow the acts of the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled; and, instead of the peaceable and constitutional means of petitioning, to encourage the people to resort to force, by a language which, I believe, no individual in this country has ever holden before, and which the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) has, at least, entitled himself to the honour of having introduced into Parliament itself. Of this we complain; nor shall we cease to complain, that those gentlemen, who express such peculiar anxiety for the interests of the people, for the welfare of the country, and such a regard for the privileges of Parliament, that, under pretence of attachment to Whig principles, they have affected to maintain those doctrines which were justifiable only under extraordinary circumstances, and to lay them down as established maxims, founded in truth and general wisdom; because our ancestors had recourse to resistance to a King, who aimed at the overthrow of the national religion; who attempted to govern without Parliaments altogether; who was, in fact, against all law; and who violated the constitution of the country;—they consider this resistance as a general rule, and, in their imitation of the principle, are animating the people, not to an opposition of illegal and uncon-

* Woodfall's Reports, November 23, p. 460.

stitutional exercise of prerogative, or of a wanton disregard of the laws, but to a resistance of a law, legally sanctioned by the three branches of the legislature. I defy these gentlemen to shew the consistency of such conduct with the principles and practice of those whom they profess to make the objects of their imitation."*

The discussions on the bills, which produced many noble specimens of English eloquence, and none more distinguished than the speech of Mr. Grant, (the present Master of the Rolls,) on the 25th of November, which, for strength of argument, solidity of thought, perspicuity of arrangement, and correctness of principle, has seldom been equalled, were protracted to the beginning of December, when they finally passed the House of Commons. The violence of the Opposition produced a very different effect from that which was expected from it; for it considerably diminished their numbers, which were unusually small upon every division, and never was any measure sanctioned by larger majorities. Universal exertions, indeed, had been made to procure petitions against the bills, from every description of persons; but though these efforts were productive of little effect, in biassing the judgment of Parliament, they made a considerable impression on the public mind, and greatly increased that ferment which had before manifested itself.

In considering the bills themselves, it cannot be denied, that the restrictions imposed by one of them, on the exercise of constitutional rights and privileges, were such as could be justified only by imperious necessity; and had the Minister failed to establish the existence of such necessity, he would have had no solid reason to urge in their support. But the necessity was clearly and fully demonstrated; and it appeared evident to all impartial, unbiassed, and reflecting, minds, that nothing less than such remedies as the bills provided, would suffice to stem that torrent of disaffection which, gushing out from various sources, threatened to overwhelm the whole fabric of British freedom.—It is only for the better security of that goodly edifice, that it is allow-

* Woodfall's Reports, November 24, p. 470.

able to impose even temporary restriction on the enjoyment of any portion of that liberty which constitutes the birthright of Britons.

By the first of these laws "for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and government, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," it was enacted, That if any persons should compass, or imagine, or intend, death, destruction, or any bodily harm, to the person of the King, or to depose him, or way-lay, in order, by force, to compel him to change his measures or counsels, or to overawe either House of Parliament, or to excitean invasion of any of his Majesty's dominions, and shall express and declare such intentions by printing, writing, or any overt-act, he shall suffer death as a traitor.—And, if any one, by writing, printing or other speakings, shall use any words or sentences, to incite the people to hatred and contempt of the King, or of the government and constitution, he shall incur the punishment of a high misdemeanor; that is, fine, imprisonment, and pillory; and, for a second offence, he is subject to a similar punishment, or transportation for seven years, at the discretion of the court. This statute was to continue in force until the end of the next session of Parliament, after the demise of the Crown.

The other statute, for the suppression of seditious meetings, enacts, that no meeting, exceeding the number of fifty persons, shall be holden, for the purpose of any petition, or remonstrance, to the King, or either House of Parliament, for the alteration of any matters established in Church or State, or for the purpose of deliberating on any grievance in the same, unless notice of such a meeting be given in the names of seven householders, in some public newspapers, five days, at least, before the meeting; and every publisher of a newspaper, who advertises such a meeting without such a notice as is particularly described in the statute, shall forfeit the sum of 50*l*. Or, instead of being inserted in a newspaper, it may be sent, five days before the meeting, to the clerk of the peace of the county, who shall immediately transmit a copy of it to three justices of the peace within the county. But all meetings, without such previous notice, consisting of more than fifty persons, assembled for the aforesaid purposes, shall be unlawful

assemblies; and if, after a proclamation made by a magistrate to disperse, more than twelve continue together, they will be guilty of a capital felony. And if, in a meeting held pursuant to notice, it shall either be proposed in the notice, or any one shall propose, at the meeting, to alter, without authority of Parliament, any matter established by law, or make any proposition to excite hatred against the King, or the constitution, then one or more justices may order the assembly to disperse, and may order the persons who made such propositions to be taken into custody. And any person who shall obstruct any magistrate in the discharge of his duty, in enforcing the directions of this statute, shall suffer death without benefit of clergy.

And if any person shall open a house, where lectures shall be read upon public grievances, or the laws and government of these kingdoms, to which persons shall be admitted for money, such house, unless previously licensed, shall be considered a disorderly house; and the person, by whom it is opened, shall forfeit 100*l.*; and all other persons concerned, as the president or chairman at such lectures, or all who shall pay or receive money for admission, or who shall deliver out tickets, shall also forfeit the same sum. But two justices may grant a license to read such lectures, which shall continue in force for one year, unless sooner revoked by the justices at quarter-sessions. But this statute does not extend to lectures in the Universities, or to discourses given by school-masters to their scholars; and all county or other meetings, called by the Lord-Lieutenant or Sheriff; as well as meetings called by two justices, or by the major part of a grand jury; or by the proper officers of a corporation, are specially exempted from the operation of the act.—Three years was the period assigned for the duration of this act; but the experience of its beneficial effects induced the legislature to renew it.*

* The learned Editor of Blackstone,† in reference to this act, observes, "The seditious meetings, which were held before the passing of this statute, were, in fact, temporary insurrections, and a scandal to a regular government; and, however vehement the arguments of some, but principally of those whom they were intended to restrain, that public liberty was endangered, yet it ought to be remembered, that public liberty cannot exist without public security. The ancient constitutional meetings for the investigation of public affairs, with

† Professor Christian.

In an early stage of the debates on these bills, Mr. Sheridan took an opportunity of venting his spleen against the magistrates, who had been appointed under the new Police Act. Alluding to the authority to disperse seditious meetings, proposed to be vested in the magistrates, he desired the House to recollect what the magistrates were in Westminster, who were to be entrusted with this authority.—*They were not, like the gentlemen of that House, of independent fortunes, and administering justice gratuitously on their own estates, but paid creatures, pensioners, and venal dependents on Ministers;—men without independence, without integrity, and without talents.** A libel, more atrocious, more indecent, and

which our forefathers were contented, are not, in the smallest degree, affected by this statute. A public meeting may, at any time, be called to take into consideration the state of the nation, or the conduct of the King's Ministers, by a Lord Lieutenant, *Custos Rotulorum*, Sheriff of a county, a Convenor of a county, or stewartry, of Scotland, two Justices of the Peace, the major part of a Grand Jury, either at the assizes or quarter-sessions, the Mayor, or head officer, of any city, or town corporate, or the Alderman, or head officer, of any ward or division, or any corporate body. All these may, in their respective jurisdictions, call public meetings, which have the same uncontrolled power of discussion as they had before the statute. Can, then, any wise and well-intentioned Englishman say that his liberty is violated by this valuable statute?"

Blackstone's Commentaries, thirteenth edition, with notes and additions, by Edward Christian, Esq. &c. &c. Vol. IV. Note to p. 89.

* "What is to be done to render them fit for their offices? First, you must give them independence, then integrity, and lastly talents." Woodfall's Reports, Nov. 10, 1795, p. 194. If these magistrates were *not*, as Mr. Sheridan asserted, men of independent fortunes, like *some* members of that House of Commons, they were, also, *not*, like other members of *that* House of Commons, profligate retailers of seditious and treasonable sentiments, sacrificing public duty to the gratification of personal malice, and disappointed ambition;—they were *not* men who courted the privilege of Parliament as the only means of securing themselves from a gaol;—they were *not* men who assumed the mask of patriotism to cover the most selfish and desperate views;—they were *not* men who gloried in acts for which others, in less favoured situations, have met with ignominious, and highly-deserved, punishment;—they were *not* men, who, making a boast of independence, did not dare to shew their faces in public till returned, by the pliant courtesy of some convenient friend, for one of those venal boroughs, which had formed the constant subject of their public censures;—they were *not* the vulgar pandars of a turbulent populace; nor yet the prating parasites of an easy Prince;—they were *not* political quacks, who retailed their pestilential nostrums to the ignorant mob, to poison their minds, and to receive their dear-bought plaudits in return;—they were *not* hypocritical demagogues who, steadily pursuing a systematic course of disloyalty, occasionally strayed into the fields of loyalty, to gather the flowers of popularity, when they were not to be found elsewhere;—and, lastly, they were *not* profligate spend-

more false, was never uttered in any of those seditious meetings, the object of which was to defame, with a view to destroy, the constituted authorities of the country. If the magistrates of Westminster were really such profligate and despicable characters, as the licentious tongue of a demagogue here dared to represent them, the Lord Chancellor, without whose authority they could neither be appointed, nor yet continue to act, deserved to be impeached for as gross a breach of his public duty as any of which he could well be guilty. But it was more prudent and more safe, though certainly less honourable and courageous, to attack a body of men who had no means of defence, than to revile Ministers who were present, and prepared to hurl back the abuse lavished on them on the heads of their opponents. The contemptible opinion here avowed of the police magistrates of the metropolis, if there were really any thing more than mere rant and declamation, in this attack of Mr. Sheridan, was evidently founded on the circumstance of their receiving salaries for their services; but the same objection would apply to the judges themselves; the only difference between them being, that the latter are appointed for life, and the former only for a limited time, settled by the legislature. If this were a radical objection, justice could not be administered at all in the metropolis, as it would be impossible to find men, properly qualified for the office, who would devote the whole of their time to the gratuitous discharge of such important duties; and it must again be left to the most venal of all men, who literally converted its administration into a regular trade. It must be admitted, however, that so long as the situation of police magistrates continues to be less permanent than the situation of judges, their conduct should excite a great degree of constitutional jealousy, and a strict vigilance, in all cases in which the Crown is immediately concerned. If either judge or magistrate could so far forget his duty as to carry with him his political passions and

thrifts, rioting in sensual debauchery, making dishonesty and fraud the subject of mirth, and the theme of a jest, prostituting the bounteous gifts of nature, genius, and talents to the most unworthy purposes, and reducing themselves below the level of the brute. It would have been but fair in Mr. Sheridan, when intent on describing the *negative* qualities of these objects of his reprehension, so to have extended the list of them as to make it productive of its *proper* effect. His friends speak loudly of his *candour*,—what a pity, then, he should have suffered so fine an opportunity for its display to elude his grasp.

prejudices into the seat of justice, and suffer them to influence his judicial decisions, he would be a disgrace to his station, and public reprobation should be the reward of his profligacy. But besides the pride of character which may naturally be supposed to attach to persons in such situations, they are further bound, by the solemn obligation of an oath, to administer justice according to law; before, therefore, they are accused of conduct, which would amount to a commission of wilful perjury, something more than loose asseverations, and the interested deductions of distempered zeal, should be adduced in support of the charge. Let facts be brought forward; let proofs fix the criminality; and then the voice of vengeance cannot be too loud, nor the hand of punishment too severe. But, whatever licentiousness of speech the rules of Parliament may allow, the public violation of truth and decency is disgraceful to any Christian assembly; and, as the endeavour to bring the magistracy of the country into contempt, is, from its tendency to produce the worst effects on society, marked by the particular disapprobation of the law, it should, when made by a legislator, incur the strongest censure.

Another incidental question was brought into discussion during the same debates. Mr. Reeves had published a pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on the English Government," and addressed to the quiet good sense of the people, which contained some severe strictures on the Whigs, and, consequently, gave great offence to the Opposition.

The ingenuity of Mr. Sturt, who stood forward as the champion of the London Corresponding Society, and as the advocate of all similar societies, and of the printer of the treasonable hand-bills, and who, at this very moment, declared, that, for his part, he should prefer a *revolution* to a *reform*,* was exercised in discovering in this tract, which was designed for men of far different intellects from his own, something which he was pleased to term a libel on the constitution.—He introduced the passage, which he had selected for censure, to the notice of the House, by requesting permission to "read a bit of treason." In this passage the author had compared the British Monarchy

* Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, November 23, 1795, p. 410.

to a tree,* the stock of which was the Monarch, and the Lords and Commons were the branches.—" But these," said the author, " are only branches, and derive their origin, and their nutriment, from their common parent: they may be lopped off, and the tree be a tree still; shorn, indeed, of its honours, but not, like them, cast into the fire. The Kingly government may go on, in all its functions, without Lords and Commons; it has, heretofore, done so for years together; and, in our times, it does so during every recess of Parliament; but, without the King, his Parliament is no more."

A plain man would naturally have supposed, that the mere statement of a constitutional fact, that the British Monarchy does not cease to exist, while the Parliament ceases to sit, or after it has been dissolved, (and nothing more either was or could be meant by this passage,) a fact as obvious to the most ignorant of the multitude as to the most profound lawyer, or the most acute statesman, could neither meet with contradiction from any one, nor afford the least food for party or faction to feast upon. " But," exclaimed the erudite commentator of the House of Commons;—" lopped off!—This is a pretty fellow!—What sort of a tree will the Constitution be when the House of Commons is lopped off?" This learned question might certainly have been aptly answered by another question;—What sort of a tree was the Constitution when the House of Commons was last dissolved?

The subject thus mentioned, incidentally, was improved upon, without loss of time, by Mr. Sheridan, who vented his spleen against the Father of the Loyal Associations, whom he abused as a most atrocious libeller of the Constitution;—the whole party joined in the senseless outcry; and a *ministerial hireling*, with other tropes and figures, in constant use with the faction, was echoed from one end to the other of the Opposition-bench. But Mr. Sheridan, who had so

* The comparison of the British Constitution to a tree was not a new thought. In the " *Relations and Observations, Historical and Politick*, upon the Parliament, begun in Anno Domini 1640, &c." printed in 1648; a representation of " THE ROYALL OAKE OF BRITTAYNE," may be seen, with a gang of Presbyterians and Independents, busily employed in hewing it down, with intent to cast the whole of it, trunk as well as branches, into the fire.

recently avowed his opinion, that he should not be a man of spirit if he did not advise the people to resist the execution of the law, in other words, to rebel, now resolved to prove his legitimate title to that character, by lavishing every coarse invective which a vulgar mind could generate on the *supposed* author of this harmless tract, in a place where he had no opportunity of repelling the attack.

The party were perfectly sensible that Mr. Sturt was not a fit person to be intrusted with the management of so delicate a question; and it was soon resolved, therefore, to take it out of his hands. One better skilled in party manœuvres, and more conversant with parliamentary tactics, was selected as the champion of the Constitution against this formidable assailant. Mr. Sheridan, on the 26th of November, brought the subject regularly, and formally, before the House; and seriously moved, "That the said pamphlet is a most malicious, scandalous, and seditious libel, and highly reflecting on the glorious Revolution, containing matters tending to create jealousies and divisions among his Majesty's subjects, to alienate their affections from our present happy form of government, as established in King, Lords, and Commons,* and to subvert the true principles of our free Constitution; and that the said pamphlet is a high breach of the privileges of this House." Ridiculous, and preposterous, as this motion was, as coming from Mr. Sheridan, and applied to Mr. Reeves; and appearing, as it must appear to all who had a knowledge of the principles and writings of this last gentleman, a fit subject only for derision and contempt, it gave rise to a long and curious debate.—It required, indeed, no common command of countenance, to remain serious, during Mr. Sheridan's speech, after all the inflammatory harangues which the House was in the habit of hearing, from him and his associates.†—Never did the Commons of Great Britain, in modern times

* Mr. Sheridan was, no doubt, ignorant that this very proposition of his own, that the sovereignty of this realm was vested in three estates, viz. King, Lords, and Commons, had experienced the same fate which he proposed to allot to the pamphlet of Mr. Reeves. It was formally condemned by a decree of the University of Oxford, in the year 1683, and the book which contained it (written by Dr. Hunton) was ordered to be burned.

† It appears not a little extraordinary, that Mr. Sheridan should have stigmatized a tract as seditious and libellous for reflecting on the Revolution of 1688, when no man has cast

at least, appear to so little advantage, as during this discussion. The most gross ignorance of the parliamentary and legal history of the country was displayed; and such *criticism* exhibited, as would have disgraced an undergraduate at either of our Universities.—But it answered the purpose of the party, by affording them an opportunity of abusing the most celebrated writers who had combated their principles, and opposed their designs. The *Constitutional Lawyers* joined the wits and witlings of the House, and took a conspicuous part in the debate. Messrs. Jekyll and Erskine united with Messrs. Sheridan and Courtenay, in condemning the performance, as the most dull and despicable of all productions, and yet as the most abusive and dangerous of all libels. It was curious to hear Mr. Courtenay speaking, in a tone of decision, on "The Origin of Government," by the Reverend John Whitaker; being as well qualified to pronounce on the merit of the productions of that learned historian, profound antiquary, and eminent divine; as this last was to appreciate the varied excellencies of the different *nugæ venales*, and *facetiæ parliamentariæ* of ancient and modern times. Mr. Reeves had no more reason to be ashamed of the company in which his enemies chose to place him, with a Whitaker and a Jones, than of the invectives which were lavished on him by a Sheridan and a Courtenay. Mr. Erskine's zeal, as usual, outstripping his discretion, if not his knowledge, led him to anticipate the verdict of the jury, and to declare that, were he a juror himself, he would pronounce a verdict of guilty on Mr. Reeves, without leaving the court.*

more severe reflections on that great event than himself.—In a debate on the twentieth of February, 1800, Mr. Sheridan, alluding to the reign of King William, said, "*The majority of the nation at that period were* JACOBITES;—*the* JACOBITES *were composed of the nobility, and the landed interest; and were formidable in their principles and opposition to King William.*" This is a direct assertion, that the majority of the nation, in population and property, were adverse to the Revolution;—in which case, it must have been a revolution on Jacobinical principles, brought about by the efforts of the few, aided by a foreign force, against the wishes of the many.—It is not possible to cast a stronger reflection, "on the glorious Revolution;" and if the House of Commons of 1800 had acted consistently with the principles of the House of Commons of 1795, they would have taken down Mr. Sheridan's words, and have passed on them appropriate censures.

* At the close of his speech, Mr. Erskine said, "When a jury shall be impannelled to try this case, and see the attack upon the Constitution stated in the indictment, they must, I

This torrent of abuse, which thus threatened to overwhelm an unprotected individual, and to bear down, as it were, law and justice in its course, Mr. Windham, with that generosity and manliness which so strongly mark his polished mind, alone attempted to stem. He had, on the first introduction of the question, immediately penetrated the motives of his accusers, and endeavoured to put the House on their guard. He loudly condemned the very indecent language which had been applied to Mr. Reeves; the gentlemen, he truly remarked, who had so traduced his character, had doubtless good reason for their conduct; the author had incurred their displeasure, in proportion as he had gained the good-will of the country.—He hoped, that neither the House nor the nation would forget his exertions in 1792, in which he was supported by the whole country. If they forgot these laudable efforts, they were ungrateful. Mr. Reeves was a man holding an honourable place under government, and receiving the reward of honourable services. His general conduct was approved by the greater, and, he was sure, the better, part of the nation. But the conduct of the Opposition had exposed them to the imputation of being too deeply involved in the machinations, which the activity of Mr. Reeves had laboured to counteract; and why was he on this account to be debarred from speaking his sentiments, or from contributing to defend the Constitution? Mr. Windham told the Opposition, that he knew the purpose of their severity and abuse.—He knew well their motive for traducing Mr. Reeves, and other active Magistrates, and especially those of Westminster, many of whom were men of great respectability. Their designs, and aims, were clearly developed, and their zeal, after their former supineness (in respect of the numerous libels published by the Seditious Societies) well understood.*

am convinced, *feel themselves involved as parties in the libel*, as well as the House of Commons, which ordered the prosecution."—Woodfall's Reports, November 26, p. 13. And he assigned this as one of his reasons for voting for a prosecution.—Strange notions of justice must he entertain, who can coolly propose to send a man to be tried by those, who, he confesses, *are parties as well as judges*, in the cause. The House of Commons, indeed, claim the privilege of acting in that double capacity; and, therefore, possibly, its members may be attached to a mode of proceeding which is at variance with every principle of British jurisprudence.

* Speech of November 23.—Woodfall's Reports, p. 429, 430.

These observations, on account of their justice, had drawn down on Mr. Windham much of that obloquy which was cast, so profusely, on Mr. Reeves. It did not deter him, however, from delivering his sentiments, when the House were called upon to decide on the question.

He then entered into a masterly analysis of the tract; discriminating, with the most correct judgment, between its different parts and positions; pointing out its clear and obvious meaning; and proving its perfect innocence, both in matter and tendency. With great force of reasoning he vindicated the freedom of discussion on historical subjects. He shewed, that, on such speculative topics, as that discussed by Mr. Reeves, various and contrary opinions were held, not by ignorant and uninformed men, but by persons of acknowledged judgment in law and politics. They were usually considered as proper to be left to the speculations of the learned and the curious;—and, on subjects relative to constitutional history, and the theories of government, the difficulty was to find any source of agreement. It was no easy matter to find two men of learning and sense, who would agree upon the same definition of the constitution of this country. It was well known, that many people differed from Mr. Hume, and that Mr. Hume and Mrs. Macaulay differed from each other; yet it was never in contemplation to prosecute either of them for their different definitions. To all candid minds, the fair interpretation of the passage, he thought, exempted it from the implication charged upon the intention of the writer. Indeed, it could only be ascribed by the most miserable of all quibbles, a quibble upon subjects refined in themselves, and claiming, for that reason, a larger latitude of interpretation than was allowed by a foolish sort of strictness, the essence of poverty or chicane, and calculated for other objects. When they came to a matter of such difficulty as the constitution of England in the abstract, a constitution of a great country, of amazing elasticity, and consequent modification, under different emergencies, what was it but the highest absurdity and folly, to treat such a speculation like a cause in a criminal court, conducted by an attorney, with the aid of a special pleader and his witnesses.

Points of law demanded one mode of consideration; points of science another. It was one thing to explain mathematics, another to develope political truth. In all writings on government, the evil tendency, either near or remote, should be regarded. With respect to the particular work under consideration, it should be enquired, what was the general idea resulting from the whole? what was the peculiar object of the selected passage? whether it were a lapse in the author, from the general spirit of his work? or what latent motive was likely to have induced him to compose it? Unless such a liberal investigation of facts were adopted, no man could be expected to treat a subject of such difficulty, as the nice and careful analysis of the British constitution, with fairness. To the reading of such works an enlarged mind should be applied, and they should be examined with something of the spirit with which they were written.

Having premised thus much, Mr. Windham proceeded to examine the passage in question, with the spirit which he recommended; but, at the same time, with the greatest critical acumen, he followed the author through the train of ideas, or rather through the series of facts, which led to the conclusion, that the government of England *is a monarchy*. He challenged any one to say, that this assertion was a fallacy. There were, he knew, persons who set up the doctrine, that the King formed no part of the constitution. The contrary, however, was so unalterably true, that, although the monarchy might remain in vigour and activity, without the branches, the branches could not remain a single instant without the Sovereign. Although these branches were sincerely reverenced by Englishmen, monarchy was, nevertheless, the first in their thoughts; because monarchy was permanent, while the others were variable. He dissected the figure and metaphor of the *tree*, and while he shewed it would not bear the construction which had been put upon it, he detected its inaccuracy, in a single point. The Kingly government, without Lords or Commons, might, undoubtedly, subsist; but when the author said *in all its functions*, unquestionably the expression was inaccurate; that it would be so in the opinion of the author himself was evident from the pamphlet, where, in two pages

preceding that which contains this metaphor, he expressly states, that "the King can enact no laws without the *advice and consent* of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, who are, *in some sort*, counsellors of his own chusing, but also of the Commons in Parliament assembled." Therefore it was not strictly true, philosophically speaking, that it might subsist *in all its functions*, as laws cannot be enacted without the other branches subsisting with the Sovereign. But in all the other functions (except those of the legislature), it unquestionably was true that the monarchy might go on without them. He next referred to the allusion to Charles the First, and to the demises of the Crown, to shew the truth of the assertion; "But without the King, *his* Parliament is no more." These historical facts, he insisted, afforded sufficient grounds for defending the passage upon constitutional principles.—So thoroughly convinced was he of the innocent intentions of the author, that he would as soon put his hand in the fire, as adopt the construction of the other side of the House. And he called upon the House to remember, that it was not sufficient to send this matter to a jury, because gentlemen thought the charge *probable*; it was unfitting, and disgraceful, if the decision of the jury was, in the least, likely to be against them. They were sending their charge generally, though their judgment stood hypothetically.*

The House were not in a humour to give due weight to these arguments, strong, and, indeed, irresistible as they appear to an impartial mind, nor to adopt the spirit so emphatically recommended, and so ably enforced.—No attempt, even, was made to answer the principal arguments of Mr. Windham. Mr. Pitt, whether resolved that the Opposition should not monopolize the triumph which they anticipated, or convinced, though scarcely credible, of the mischievous tendency so strangely imputed to the pamphlet, adopted the popular side of the question. Admitting him to have been actuated by the former of these motives, his conduct might be *politic*, but was not *generous*. Nor did he display his usual perspicuity and strength in the arrange-

* Woodfall's Reports, November 26, p.p. 13. 18.

ment and application of his arguments. He premised, at the outset, that if the House considered the nature of the British government, they would find, that they derived their honour, their happiness, and the security of property and principle, from *the three branches which constituted the mixed and limited monarchy of this country;* each of which was equally essential, and without which either would be obviously lessened of its virtue and authority.* · Here was a constitutional principle laid down, but in terms loose, vague, and incorrect. Mr. Pitt could only mean, that the King, the Lords, and the Commons, were essential parts of the British constitution; which would be subverted by the destruction of either of them. This position, Mr. Reeves would be the last man in the world to dispute; and certainly there was nothing in his tract which could, without a monstrous perversion of terms, and misrepresentation of object, be construed into a denial of it. But the assertion, that *three branches* constitute a *monarchy*,† is a gross contradiction in terms, and involves a political absurdity. The word *branches*, too, appears to have been here used as synonimous with *estates*, in which case the position is obviously false, as the King is not one of the estates of the realm;—the three estates, consisting of the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal, and the Commons, as declared in the bill of rights, and as appears in the wording of statutes. In a discussion, intending to fix a legal construction on a metaphysical expression, with a view to a judicial proceeding, the use of vague, indefinite, or incorrect terms, ought particularly to have been avoided. Besides, it does not, of necessity, follow, that, because the King, the Lords, and the Commons, are equally essential to the preservation of the constitution, they are co-equal and co-ordinate in power. The principles of our antient jurists, and the very language of our statutes, forbid us to entertain any such supposition. Bracton, speaking of the King, says, "*Omnis sub eo est, et ipse sub nullo, nisi tantum, sub Deo.*" Lord Coke lays it down as a maxim, that the King is *Caput, principium et finis Parliamenti.* And Dyer tells us, that the

* Woodfall's Reports, November 26. p. 18.

† This loose expression first began to prevail in the time of Charles the First; and the use of it is strongly reprobated by Lord Clarendon.

King is the head, and that the *Lords and Commons are the members.** If it were urged, that this might be considered as constitutional law, previous to the Revolution, but that other principles have been introduced by that event, the Whig managers of Sacheverell's trial would supply a satisfactory answer to such a plea;—for they explicitly declared, that it would be *a libel on the Revolution*, to say that any innovation in the constitution had taken place at that period.

In combating one of the rules of judgment, laid down by Mr. Windham, Mr. Pitt observed, that the offensive paragraph must be judged of in its *sole*, as well as in its collateral, sense; an author of seditious or libellous matter ought to find no refuge or defence in his own *inconsistency*. Yet such a mode of judging is not only contrary to the principles of justice, but at variance with the uniform practice of the courts. The whole of a pamphlet, containing a libel, is invariably read to the jury; and, for this plain reason, that it is impossible to collect the author's *intention*, which constitutes the very essence of the imputed crime, from a detached and insulated passage. An author has assuredly no right to find shelter from prosecution, beneath the shade of his own inconsistency. But, on the other hand, no one has a right to select a single passage from a work, and put a construction upon it, inconsistent with the whole spirit and tenour of the book. If the passage, taken by itself, would even seem to warrant such a construction, still it should be carefully compared with what precedes and follows it; from which alone its true and legitimate meaning and intent can possibly be collected.

It was further argued by Mr. Pitt, that the author, in his metaphor, spoke not of a temporary interruption of the functions of Parliament, but of its being *lopped off* entirely. In saying, that the King could go on alone, whether the author meant that the King should possess the legislative power or not, he conceived him to be equally wrong. If the King was supposed to have the power of making laws, then a

* Dyer, fol. 60. pl. 19. See this subject discussed in the introduction to the folio edition of Dr. Nalson's "Impartial Collection of the great affairs of State, from the beginning of the Scotch Rebellion in 1639, to the Murther of King Charles the First."

total subversion and destruction of the constitution must be presumed. If it was supposed that the King had not the legislative power, in that case the position was equally wrong and absurd. But that the author could never have had it in contemplation to contend that, if the two Houses of Parliament ceased to be integral parts of the constitution, then Kingly power, as settled by that constitution, could go on, is most certain. Such a conclusion could not be supported by the passage itself, and was utterly inconsistent with the explicit declarations of the author in other parts of the tract. He had expressly stated *how*, and in *what manner*, the Kingly power could go on, namely, as it had done in former periods of our history, when Parliament had not been convened for several successive years, and as it still did, during every recess. What pretext, therefore, could there be for imputing to him an intention of maintaining the preposterous assertion, that the British Constitution could subsist, when Parliament was annihilated?

It has been already shewn, that the metaphor was philosophically false, as *all* the functions of sovereignty could not subsist without the power of making laws; and the author had distinctly stated, that the King could not make laws without the advice and consent of the two Houses of Parliament. But the abstract position, that the King has not the power of making laws, is as unconstitutional, as the assertion that he can make them without such advice and consent. In a very recent instance the Attorney-General had publicly declared, in a court of justice,* "The power of the state, by which I mean *the power of making laws*, and of enforcing the execution of them when made, IS VESTED IN THE KING." There would have been just as much reason for detaching this passage from the Attorney-General's speech, and making it the ground of a criminal prosecution, as there was for adopting the same mode for the author of the pamphlet in question. It would have been an act of great injustice so to do, for the Attorney-General, having stated the broad constitutional principle, (the denial of which, be it observed, is liable to the penalty of premunire, by the statute of Ann, c. 7. sect. 2.) proceeded to shew how the King exer-

* In his address to the Jury, on the trial of Hardy for high-treason.

cised his legislative power,—in the same way in which the author of the tract proceeded to explain *how* the Kingly power goes on, when the Parliament is either prorogued or dissolved.—Mr. Pitt, however, dissented from this construction; and, conceiving the real meaning of the passage to convey a doctrine incompatible with the existence of the British Constitution, voted for the motion.—But Mr. Sheridan deemed it prudent to expunge from his motion that part of it which charged the pamphlet with being a libel on the Revolution. Indeed, it is inconceivable how such a charge could have been preferred in the first instance, or how it could have been tolerated, for a moment, by the House, who, having heard the pamphlet read, (and who ought also to have read it themselves,) must have heard that the Reformation and Revolution "were memorable transactions, conducted in a way that was purely English; that the actors in them proceeded with their remedy as far as the disease went, and no farther; and that they never suffered themselves to lose sight of this main rule, that what they did was to preserve the ancient government, and not to destroy it;" they must also have heard the Revolution mentioned "as a precedent regarded with reverence, and with gratitude, towards those who made it." When the motion was so amended it was adopted by the House; a committee of inquiry was then appointed to discover the author;* after sitting some time, and exercising inquisitorial powers on matters not connected with the subject referred to their consideration, and collecting a great deal of illegal evidence, they made a report, on the 14th of December, through the medium of Mr. Sheridan, who embraced the occasion, for tracing the rise, progress, and proceedings, of the Loyal Associations, in 1792, which he misrepresented without shame, and condemned without justice. After great professions of regard for the freedom of the press, and with equal feelings of respect, no doubt, for the trial by jury, Mr. Sheridan proposed, that the House, becoming at once *party*, *prosecutor*, and *judge*, should resolve, "That one of the said pamphlets be burned by the hands of the common hangman, in New Palace Yard, at one o'clock on Monday the 21st instant; that another of the said pamphlets be also burned,

* It is before noticed that the pamphlet was anonymous.

on Tuesday the 22d instant, at the Royal Exchange, by the common hangman; and that the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex *be directed* to attend, and see the same carried into execution."

He must have been a most inattentive observer, indeed, who has not discovered that the greatest declaimers against tyranny are themselves the greatest tyrants, whenever an opportunity is afforded them for exercising their power. In the present case, Mr. Sheridan exhibited a notable instance of the truth of this position. He thought himself in full possession of the power of directing the authority of the House of Commons; and he proposed to employ it, in order to crush a most meritorious individual with its weight, whose condemnation he had procured without the smallest attention to that principle of justice, which requires that no man shall be judged without being previously heard in his own defence. He proposed that Mr. Reeves should be ordered to attend at the bar of the House, not to defend himself against a sentence already passed, but to hear that *party*, *prosecutor*, and *judge*, repeat his sentence, with such comments as would be appropriate to the act; or, in other words, to receive a reprimand from the Speaker. He did not think it necessary that the party accused should be allowed to defend his cause; not to expose the unwarrantable manœuvres of his accusers, in order to pervert facts, to disguise the truth, and to fix on him intentions foreign from his heart; not to impeach their motives, as every person accused has a right to do; nor, to demonstrate his own innocence, either by arguments or evidence, which is a constitutional privilege of which no British subject can be deprived without the most flagrant violation of law and justice; but as he had condemned without hearing, he would proceed to the last office of a judge, and punish also;—for whether, as he insinuated, it was only his intention to get Mr. Reeves's name struck out of the commission as a magistrate, or whether, as was at first most reasonably supposed,* he meant to deprive him of his official situations, as a penalty for his exertions in 1792, it amounted to the assumption of

* Indeed, Mr. Sheridan expressly said, "He submitted to the Ministers themselves, whether this should not be followed up by an address to his Majesty, to remove him from any place of trust." Woodfall's Reports, December 14th, p. 502.

a judicial power, to inflict punishment, without trial; for a man cannot be *tried*, without being present, and without being allowed to speak, or to adduce evidence, in his own defence. He assigned, as a reason for objecting to a prosecution, his wish to *set an example of lenity and mercy*. Mr. Reeves must have a strangely-constructed mind, if he did not consider this assertion as the addition of *insult* to *injury*. At all events, every subsequent declaration from this quarter, expressive of regard for the liberty of the press, or of respect for the trial by jury, could not fail to be considered as—*Verba et voces, prætereaque nihil.*

Mr. Dundas, who had been absent during the former debates, expressed his opinion of this motion, in the most decided and manly terms. He condemned that complication of power which the House were advised to assume. He conceived censure to be more becoming the character of the House than *punishment*. He noticed the swarms of libels which had lately deluged the town; many of which were, in the highest degree, contumacious, and levelled directly at the proceedings of the two Houses of Parliament, though the discerning eyes of Opposition had not taken them into view. In one of the Papers the following paragraph had appeared;—"Last night, the bill for repealing the British Constitution, passed the House of Commons." Suppose Mr. Reeves were to attend that House, how was he to make his defence to evidence which had been already taken *ex parte* upon the subject? How did it accord with the principles of justice, that a man should be brought before a popular assembly, who must, in justice to their own proceedings already had, be allowed to be inflamed against him in some degree? How could he have that impartial audience, which justice required before his case should be decided upon? The question really was—whether the Commons would, in a case in which they themselves were parties, proceed to decide by their own power, or would refer the matter to a trial, by another judicature?—The resolution which passed on a former night, had pronounced the book to be a malicious and seditious libel; no one, then, could deny, that it was a fit subject for legal inquiry, and that another jurisdiction would, more properly, more soberly, and more temperately, take up the matter than the House. Mr. Dundas observed, that there was not a

single topic of accustomed attack, which Mr. Sheridan had not contrived to force into his speech. Mr. Reeves, the Association, Ministers, Judges, Justices, all these were the sports of his invective that night. He need not have taken the trouble to own, that, not the pamphlet, not the supposed author, merely as author, but that Mr. Reeves, the head of the Loyal Associations, was the object of his aversion. There was no one who had the least doubt that Mr. Sheridan's reason, for bringing this charge against Mr. Reeves, was, that he had set those associations on foot. It was superfluous for him, therefore, to confess, that the associations were the true objects of his attack. Every body would give him full credit for the fact, without the proof of his own confession.* Having made many more pointed and pertinent observations on the subject, Mr. Dundas moved, as an amendment—"That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, beseeching his Majesty to direct his Attorney-General to prosecute Mr. John Reeves, as author or publisher of the pamphlet, called, 'Thoughts on the English Government;' and the printers of the said pamphlet."

In seconding the motion, Lord Sheffield avowed the most honourable and independent sentiments.—He thought it a loss of time to notice the extraordinary expressions, or episodes, introduced by Mr. Sheridan into his speech; yet he could not but condemn the shameful proposition, of condemning a man before he was proved to be guilty. In opposition to the opinions which had been advanced, his Lordship conceived the House of Commons to be the worst place for passing sentence on the author of an objectionable pamphlet; and he was apprehensive, that his reasons for expressing that opinion would not prove very flattering to either side of the House. He observed one set of men, instead of prosecuting a libel on the Constitution, intent on prosecuting a man whom they considered as having counteracted their views; and, on the other side, he perceived a disposition to shrink from, and withhold, the common protection due to a man, whom it was evidently intended to oppress, although they did not consider him

* Woodfall's Reports, Mr. Dundas's Speech, December 14th, p. 504, 506.

as guilty.—There was but too much truth in these observations. Mr. Jekyll, however, and Mr. Fox, the former by the most despicable quibbles, and the most shallow sophistry, supported the original motion, for depriving Mr. Reeves of a trial by jury.—But the House overruled the inconsistent arguments of the Whig Party, and, ultimately, adopted Mr. Dundas's amendment, omitting only the proposed prosecution of the printer.

Thus was it decided, by the House of Commons, that a *metaphorical expression* was a fit subject for a criminal prosecution!!! Mr. Reeves was, in consequence, brought to trial, on the twentieth of May following, at Guildhall, when the verdict of the jury negatived the assertion of the House, by finding him *not guilty*.

This discussion forms a kind of epoch in the history of these times, as it served to display the sentiments of Opposition, on the loyal associations; and to shew their disposition to persecute all who opposed their sentiments, and counteracted their views, even at the expence of their own consistency, and by the sacrifice of many of the principles which they had so frequently avowed. By exhibiting, too, the acknowledgment of a party motive, as the ground-work of a criminal process, it supplies a strong confirmation of the opinion of those, who think judicial powers should never be vested in a popular assembly. The recorded declaration of the House, opposed as it was, by the sentence of a jury, serves still further to strengthen that opinion. The decision of Parliament by no means satisfied the country. The subject was discussed in various tracts, written with considerable ability, in which the principles of Mr. Reeves, and the condemned metaphor, were openly justified. While not one of the Whigs dared take their stand in the field of argument, unprotected by the shield of prejudice, and the armour of Parliament. A second tract was afterwards published, by Mr. Reeves himself,* in vindication of his first, in which he disclaimed all the principles and meaning so perversely imputed to him by the House of Commons.†

* This also was anonymous.

† In this second pamphlet, adverting to the condemned metaphor, Mr. Reeves observes,

Posterity will, with difficulty, believe, that the Opposition attempted to justify their prosecution of Mr. Reeves, by the proceedings instituted by the government against persons guilty of treasonable designs to subvert the Constitution. It will not be supposed, that it could possibly have escaped their attention, that the professed object of the persons to whom they alluded, was to overturn the existing order of things, whereas it was the declared object of Mr. Reeves to *preserve it.* While *they* addressed themselves to all the bad passions of the people, with a view to produce a revolution by the means of rebellion, *he* appealed to their *quiet good sense*, pointing out the excellencies of the existing Constitution, shewing them what reason they had for content and satisfaction, and deprecating every idea of a change. Their measures could only lead to the *destruction* of that Constitution. But, however illogical *his* arguments, however false *his* positions, no mischief could possibly accrue from them, because they went to establish the wisdom and necessity of adherence to the present system, and to expose the folly and danger of innovation. To use his own words;—"All I recommend, and express a wish for, through the whole pamphlet, is, *that the Constitution may remain as it is now by law established.*"

—"The functions here meant were those which the King can *by law* exercise, and not such as he cannot; what the King can, and not what he cannot do; according to that axiom of our law respecting the regal government, *Rex nihil potest, nisi quod jure potest.* But the meaning is explained, fully, by the example of *a recess of Parliament.* 'In our times it does so during every recess of Parliament.' This is so plain an example to controul, and expound, the whole of the metaphor, that I will not add one more syllable upon it." The matter, however, is rendered still more plain, by exhibiting—

"*The passage without the metaphor.*

"In fine, the government of England is a Monarchy;—the Monarchy is the *Caput, principium, et finis*, of the High Court of Parliament, or *Legislative Council* of the realm, the Lords and Commons, that, at the same time, *reflect dignity on the King, and afford protection to the subject;* but these are still only *a Council*, and derive their origin and *authority from the Monarch;* they may be *dissolved*, and the *King* is a *King* still, *deprived*, indeed, of *this part of his dignity*, but not *losing his state* like them, *who become private individuals.* The *executive* government may go on in all its functions without Lords or Commons; it has, heretofore, done so for years together; and, in our time, it does so, during every recess of Parliament: but, without the King, his Parliament is no more. The King, therefore, alone it is, who necessarily subsists without change or diminution; and from him alone we *unceasingly* derive the protection of law and government."

Pending these discussions, some regulations of internal economy, rendered necessary by the peculiar circumstances of the country, were enforced, and others proposed, all having for their object the adoption of means, for either counteracting the immediate effects of the existing scarcity, which had produced great and alarming distress, or for providing against its recurrence. At the very commencement of the Session, Mr. Pitt proposed to renew the act for allowing the importation of corn into the country duty free. A committee was appointed to inquire into the causes of the scarcity, and to suggest the most appropriate remedies. The members of this committee were most active in their inquiries, and diligent in their researches; and it was in consequence of their recommendation, that a bounty was proposed on wheat, flour, and Indian corn, imported; that an act was passed for prohibiting the use of wheat, and of any other grain, in the manufacture of starch; and to put a stop to the distillation of spirit from the grain; and that other measures, all tending to the same point, were adopted. Meanwhile, that active spirit of benevolence, which has ever characterized the people of England, was exerted, in every possible way, for alleviating the distresses of the poor; and the efforts of the legislature were laudably seconded by every class of the community.

In providing for the public service of the ensuing year, it was deemed necessary to require one hundred and ten thousand seamen and marines; and two hundred and seven thousand land-forces, of various descriptions. The whole expences of the year were calculated, by Mr. Pitt, when he opened the budget, on the seventh of December, at 27,662,083*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* and he proposed to raise a loan of eighteen millions, in addition to the permanent sources of revenue, in order to meet it. To pay the interest of this sum, which, with the one per cent. for the gradual reduction of the capital, amounted to 1,111,500*l.*, he suggested various new taxes, on collateral succession of landed and personal property; on the assessed taxes, an additional ten per cent.; on horses kept for pleasure; on cart-horses (two shillings each); on tobacco; and on printed cottons;—and, also, a reduction of discount and waste on salt; and a diminution of the drawback on refined

sugars; which he estimated, in the whole, at 1,127,000*l.* The requisite bills for giving legal effect to the proposals of Mr. Pitt, were all passed, through their respective stages, before the close of the year.

After the many debates, to which the proposals for premature negotiations for peace, introduced by the Opposition, had given rise; after the petitions to the same effect which had been presented to the House of Commons, and the impression which, to a certain extent, had been produced by them on the public mind, (facilitated, no doubt, by the high price of provisions, owing to the failure of the late harvest,) Mr. Pitt deemed it necessary to prove the sincerity of his own professions, as to his desire for peace, as soon as any prospect of concluding it, with safety, should occur.—He, therefore, resolved to give to his professions the security of the royal sanction.—For this purpose, a message from the King was presented to the House, on the eighth of December, in which his Majesty acquainted the House, that the crisis which was depending, at the commencement of the Session, had led to such an order of things in France, as would induce him, conformably with the sentiments which he had already declared, to meet any disposition for negotiation on the part of the enemy, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect, and to conclude a treaty for a general peace, whenever it could be effected on just and suitable terms to himself and his allies. His Majesty further expressed an earnest wish, that the spirit and determination, manifested by Parliament, added to the recent and important successes of the Austrian armies, and to the continued and growing embarrassments of the enemy, might speedily conduce to the attainment of that object, on such grounds as the justice of the cause, in which this country was engaged, and the situation of affairs, might entitle his Majesty to expect.

On the following day this message was taken into consideration. It was natural to suppose, that the Opposition, who had constantly endeavoured to force Ministers to negotiate, whether the enemy would or not, and who represented peace as the panacea for every evil, would have received, with pleasure and satisfaction, this avowal of

his Majesty's readiness to treat for peace.—But no!—it was impossible for Ministers to propose any plan, however consonant with the views which their opponents had avowed, which would extort their approbation, or avert their censure. Mr. Pitt moved an address of thanks to his Majesty for his communication, which he thought must meet the unanimous concurrence of the House, and which, therefore, he did not deem it necessary to support with any length of argument. This conciseness, however, gave offence to Mr. Sheridan, who chose to doubt the sincerity of the declaration contained in the message. The reason assigned for his doubt was, the sudden change which had taken place in the Minister's sentiments, and that, too, as he asserted, without any alteration in the state of France.—For, in his estimation, as far as his opinion could be collected from his speech, the existing government of that country was not better than the system adopted under Robespierre.—The address was displeasing to this politician, because it declared the justice of the war on our part, and because it did not disclaim the notion, that there could exist, in any country, any form of government incapable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity.—And so long as this idea was not publicly disavowed by the whole country, (who, he seemed to expect, were to sacrifice their principles, and their common sense, too, to the sublime notions of the enlightened few, who composed the Opposition,) no secure or permanent peace could be concluded. In conformity with these sentiments, he moved an amendment to the address, in which the House were to express their deep regret, that his Majesty should ever have been advised to consider the internal order of things in France, to be such as not to induce him, at any time, to meet a disposition to negotiation on the part of the enemy. And the Commons were to state, that they felt themselves, at this conjuncture, more forcibly called on to declare this opinion, because, if the existing order of things in France were admitted as the motive and inducement to negotiation, a change in that order of things might be considered as a ground for discontinuing a negotiation begun, or even for abandoning a treaty concluded.—Therefore, the Commons, duly reflecting on the calamitous waste of treasure, and of blood, to which it was now manifest the acting on this principle had so unfortunately, and so

largely, contributed; and, greatly apprehensive of the grievous and ruinous consequences, to which the persevering to act on such principles must inevitably tend, were humbly and earnestly to implore the King, that it might altogether be abandoned and disclaimed; and that the form of government, or internal order of things, in France, whatever they might be, or should become, might be no bar to a negotiation for restoring the blessings of peace, whenever it could be effected on just and suitable terms. This notable address, in which the House were called upon to belie all the sentiments which they had avowed, and the resolutions which they had adopted, from the very commencement of the war, was to conclude with an intreaty, that his Majesty would give distinct directions for an immediate negotiation to be opened with France.

This amendment was supported only by Mr. Grey and Mr. Fox, whose arguments were confuted, and whose assertions were contradicted, by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, the former of whom entered into a comparative view of the existing government of France, and of those which had preceded it, for the purpose of shewing that peace might safely be concluded with it, if fair terms could be obtained. The sense of the House was so decidedly with the Minister, on this occasion, that Mr. Sheridan did not deem it prudent to press for a division. His amendment was, of course, rejected, and the address carried. A similar address was carried in the House of Lords, with as little opposition. Earl Fitzwilliam, however, who was absent during the debate, declared his sentiments in opposition to the avowed intention of Ministers for opening a negotiation with the present government of France, which, his Lordship contended, was no better calculated to preserve the relations of peace and amity, than Robespierre and his committee of Public Safety. In his Lordship's opinion, it appeared, that no treaty could be safely concluded with France, without the restoration of the lawful government, which he considered to be the legitimate end of the war.

CHAPTER XXX.

Sincerity of Mr. Pitt's wish for peace—Character of the New Revolution at Paris—Conduct of its founders subversive of its leading principle—Means taken to compel the people to re-elect two-thirds of the existing Convention—Motives of such conduct examined—An express article of the New Code violated by the reference of the Constitution to the troops for acceptance—The newly-established freedom of the Press employed in exposing the designs of the Convention—No change effected in the conduct of the French towards foreign States—Clamours for peace excited by the Opposition—Their tendency and effects—Mr. Wickham ordered to sound the disposition of the French government, in respect of peace—His communication with Mr. Barthelemi—Motion of Mr. Grey, to compel the Ministers to open a negotiation with the French—Opposed by Mr. Pitt, who adverts to the Overtures already ordered to be made by Mr. Wickham—Motion negatived—A principle of negotiation advanced by France, amounting to the assertion of a right to bind Europe by acts of her own legislature—Investigation of this principle—Reply of the British Cabinet to the Note of the Directory—Mr. Pitt proposes a new loan and new taxes—Motion of Mr. Grey brought forward, with a view to the impeachment of Ministers—Mr. Pitt's speech—Motion rejected by a great majority—Mr. Fox moves a series of resolutions, condemning the conduct of Ministers—His speech in support of them—Accuses Ministers of purposely delaying overtures for peace, until they could not be accepted by the French—Pleads the cause of France with great zeal and ability—Censures the instructions given to Mr. Wickham, and justifies the objections of the Directory—The inconsistency and weakness of his arguments exposed—He insists on the necessity of a change of Ministers; but declares, that he never will accept of a place himself, without a retractation of all the leading principles and maxims which had been adopted by the Government and the House—Mr. Pitt answers him—Declares that peace has been his constant wish, and that the war has interfered with all his favourite plans of economy and finance—Comments on the inconsistency of Mr. Fox—Explains the difference between himself and Mr. Burke, respecting the object of the war—Confutes Mr. Fox's charge of insincerity, in the attempt to open a negotiation for peace—Resolutions negatived by 216 votes against 42—Parliament dissolved—Military operations on the Continent—Renewal of hostilities on the Rhine—Amount of the respective forces of the Austrians and French, at the opening of the campaign—Object of the French, in the invasion of Germany—Battle on the Sieg—Battle of Altenkirchen—Retreat of the Austrians—The Archduke Charles joins the army, defeats the French, and drives them back behind the Lahn—General Kray, with 11,000 men, beats 25,000 French, under Kleber—The French retreat to Dusseldorf—Operations on the Upper Rhine—Wurmser detached to Italy with 30,000 men—Superiority of the French—Moreau takes the fort of Kehl—Cowardice of the Suabian troops—Moreau crosses the Rhine, and enters Ger-

many, with 80,000 men—Defeats the Austrians under Latour, on the Murg—The Archduke takes the command of the troops on the Upper Rhine—Battle of Ettlingen—Retreat of the Imperialists—Battle of Mettingen—The French advance into Bavaria—Masterly plan of the Archduke—He marches against Jourdan's army—Jourdan retreats—The Archduke prevents his junction with Moreau—Defeats him at Kornach—Jourdan's army is dispersed, and driven beyond the Rhine—Operations on the Danube—Moreau defeated—Peace between France and Bavaria—Moreau retreats—Displays great skill and ability—Imprudent conduct of the Austrian Generals—The French re-cross the Rhine—Siege and recapture of Fort Kehl by the Austrians—Campaign in Italy—Relative forces of the Belligerent powers—Battles of Montenotte and Montelezino, Dego, and Vico—Retreat of the Allies—Peace between France and Sardinia—Retreat of the Austrians—The French cross the Po—Battle of Lodi—The French pass the Mincio—Enter Leghorn—Besiege Mantua—Wurmser arrives in Italy—Siege of Mantua raised—Austrians defeated in various actions—Wurmser retreats into the Tyrol—Battle of Rovoredo—Action at Bassano—Wurmser arrives at Mantua—Peace between Naples and France—A fresh army of Austrians, under Generals Alvinzy and Davidovich enter Italy—Battle of Fonteviva—Battle of Arcole, and retreat of Alvinzy—Battle near Verona—Defeat of the Austrians at Rivoli and Corona—They retreat into the Tyrol—Mantua surrendered to the French—Peace between France and the Pope—Termination of the campaign—Examination into the causes of the defeat of the Austrians, and the success of the French—Treachery of the Austrian officers—Falsehood of Buonaparte's reports to the Directory—Loss of either army during the campaign—Impolitic restrictions imposed on the Austrian commanders, by the Aulic Council of War—Evil effects of such a system.

[1796.] The intimation given in the King's speech, at the opening of the session, that the period was fast approaching when security might be derived from a treaty of peace concluded with the new government of France, was not loosely thrown out for the purpose of deceiving Parliament, or the public, with false hopes.—It resulted from the sincerest wish, on the part of the Minister, to put an end to the war, the moment peace could be procured, without the sacrifice of honour, interest, or safety. If, indeed, all the circumstances of the last Revolution at Paris,—for a Revolution that event must certainly be called, which destroyed the existing system of government, and introduced another of a different form and structure in its place,—were to be duly considered, very little foundation would be found to have existed, at this period, for any sanguine hopes of a material change in the views and policy of the Directorial Government. It was true, indeed, as Mr. Pitt had stated, that the species of *liberty* and *equality*, which had constituted the basis of the Revolutionary system, had been

abandoned, and that those engines of destruction, *affiliated* Societies of Jacobins, had been proscribed, by the new code, which contained nothing, on the face of it, essentially hostile to the rights and tranquillity of other states. But here ended all the advantages of the late Revolution. It rescued, indeed, the wretched people of France from the sanguinary despotism of Robespierre; but it afforded them no other improvement or relief. The new code held out, to be sure, prospects and plans more compatible with the civil liberty of the subject, than the dreadful system of terror by which it had been preceded. But the conduct of those who framed it belied the hopes which it encouraged, and the benefits which it promised. They had avowed the principle, that liberty is only to be found in a REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, the basis of which is FREEDOM OF ELECTION; and on such principle they professed to form their new constitution. But, having formed it, the first step they took was a violation of this very principle, which they had so solemnly, and so publicly, consecrated. The period prescribed by the law, for the duration of the legislative body, expired in the autumn of 1795; the people were then to reassume those rights, which they had delegated, for a given time, for the purpose of granting them to new representatives; and the full exercise of these rights was the more necessary, at that important epoch, as they had loudly and repeatedly expressed their disapprobation of their present representatives, and had proclaimed them to be unworthy of farther confidence. The legislative body were very well acquainted with this disposition of their constituents, and entertained a just dread of the consequences of an appeal to them. They well knew that they had very little chance of being re-elected; and, *therefore*, they secretly resolved, to retain possession of their seats, which not only secured an extensive influence, but (which was of infinitely greater importance to numbers of them) an ample means of subsistence, which they knew not where else to procure. They made no scruple to sacrifice the constitution, which they had just held out as a masterpiece of political wisdom, and as the only source of national happiness and prosperity, to the attainment of this sordid and interested object. Hence sprang those two decrees, already noticed, which stand without a parallel in the annals of legislative tyranny, and by which the people

were compelled to re-elect two-thirds of the existing legislature; while efficacious measures were also adopted for securing the return of a considerable part of the remaining third. So flagrant a violation of their own principles, so daring an act of oppression, was too palpable, in its tendency, to escape exposure, and too comprehensive in its scope to elude resistance. But as the nation had been kept, for three years, in a state of passive submission to the most absolute, oppressive, and unlimited power, by the Convention itself, its members were led to hope that, by the joint aid of deception, seduction, and threats, judiciously applied, they might secure even this desperate attempt against all opposition from the people. For this purpose they annexed their two decrees to the constitutional code, all discussion of which had been forbidden by the Convention, who only presented it to the people for their pure and unconditional acceptance, in the hope that, through the general prevalence of ignorance and fear, they might be confounded with the constitution itself, which they imagined would be eagerly received, as a comparative refuge from that odious system of terror and of anarchy, under which the nation had so long groaned. The Convention took special care not to separate the two decrees from the constitutional articles, nor yet to submit them, by an express and particular resolution, to the sanction of the primary assemblies, that they might become the subject of a different discussion, and of a distinct and separate consent. As the artifice, however, was too gross to impose upon the inhabitants of the great towns, and as the public indignation, which had been manifested at the crimes of the Convention, might naturally be expected there to burst forth with greater force and energy, care was taken to surround them with troops. The primary assemblies of Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Rouen, Toulouse, and many other places, held their deliberations in the midst of bayonets, and under the eyes of a political missionary, deputed by the Convention, with orders to employ force, in case intrigue, threats, and corruption, should prove inadequate to procure the desired consent. Another means to which they had recourse, for the same purpose, was the general liberation of all the agents of terror, who had been imprisoned as soon as their employers ceased to have occasion for their services. These men were sent to the primary assemblies, in order to

promote the adoption of the two decrees, which would secure impunity both to themselves and to their employers. Lastly, in violation of both the spirit and the letter of the new constitution, which expressly declared, that *the army is essentially an obedient body, which can in no case whatever, deliberate*, they decreed, that the constitutional code, accompanied by their two favourite decrees, should be presented to the troops for their acceptance, in order that, if, in spite of all these precautions, they should be rejected by the primary assemblies, they might involve the people in hostilities with the army, and, in a paroxysm of despair, create a civil war, rather than give up their authority, like those base tyrants who dishonoured the throne of the Cæsars, who courted the suffrages of the legions, when they were afraid that the votes of the Roman Senate, and the people, would be adverse to their hopes. Thus every artifice was exerted for the accomplishment of their purpose, for keeping the reins of power in their blood-stained hands. Such good use, however, was made of the newly-proclaimed freedom of the press, that the eyes of the nation were opened to their designs; and the general disapprobation of the decrees was pretty loudly and openly expressed. To obviate the ill effects of this hostile impression, the Convention did not wait till all the primary assemblies had sent the result of their deliberations,—until a clear and decisive majority of the nation had given or refused their consent to the two decrees,—but rejected the votes of those who had unanimously condemned them. They declared, that they were accepted by a majority of the people; though the declaration was so clumsily worded, and contained so many obvious inaccuracies and errors, that it afforded the strongest presumption that the decrees had been rejected by the greater number.*

* "The Convention had promised and decreed," says an attentive observer of the whole of this transaction, and an eye-witness of their conduct, "that the documents, that is, the list of Primary Assemblies, with the number of voters who had accepted or rejected the two decrees, on which their committee had founded their report, should be printed; and this would be the best means of imposing silence on all who questioned the accuracy of the report. They did not hesitate, however, to break this promise, although their honour was so deeply concerned in its fulfilment. But, after having myself ascertained the fact, in the Electoral Assembly, of which I was a member, that three-fourths of the Primary Assemblies, in my department, had voted against the re-election of two-thirds of the Convention, and that the

As there was but little ground for satisfaction in this event, in its tendency to improve the situation of the people, so was there but little reason to hope that it would be productive of any material change in the foreign policy of the French government. The reins of power had, indeed, passed from the hands of Robespierre and his bosom friends; but they were placed in the hands of men who had abetted most of his sanguinary measures, and who were almost, if not wholly, as guilty as himself. It was not to be expected that such men would pursue a different system of policy in regard to foreign powers, however necessary they might feel it, as well for their own safety,—which, be it observed, was the sole consideration by which they were influenced in their opposition to Robespierre,—as from a regard to the public feeling, to render their internal government rather more compatible with the happiness, the welfare, and the personal security of the people.

Still Mr. Pitt was willing to give them credit for a more pacific disposition than their predecessors had displayed; and was most anxious that an early manifestation of it should afford him the much wished-for opportunity of opening a negotiation for peace. But he well knew that any premature disclosure of his own wish would only serve to postpone the period of its accomplishment. On the other hand, the Opposition and their friends out of Parliament, spared no pains to increase the clamour for peace, which they had originally excited. They could not, however, but be sensible, that nothing could tend more strongly to indispose our enemies to accede to such terms as would be consistent with the honour and safety of this country, than the manifestation of an ungovernable desire of peace, on the part of the people. In proportion to the warmth of that desire would the exorbitancy of their demands, most naturally, increase. Besides, a

remaining third had taken no notice of it, excepting about a score who had approved it, I ceased to be astonished at the silence of the Convention, and could not forbear to admire their discretion. I have not a doubt but that a similar verification took place in all the Electoral Assemblies, and that the result was every where nearly the same."

A Cursory Review of the transactions of the 13th Vendemiaire, (5th of October, 1795,) and of their effects. Translated from the French. Note to p. 7.

nation, which has peace ever uppermost in its thoughts, and makes it the constant subject of its discourse, is not likely to display much vigour in the pursuit of a war. It is one thing to entertain a sincere wish to make peace, and a resolution to conclude it, whenever it can be made, on honourable terms; and another, to be incessantly talking of peace, and to be loud in expressing our anxious desire to obtain it. To be tumultuous for peace is to put a fresh weapon into the hand of our enemy, with the aid of which he may, without a struggle, wrest from us all the conquests, and all the advantages, which we have gained from him by the sword.—It is a strong symptom of a mean and cowardly disposition, of a low and selfish mind, without spirit or fortitude, to bear the pressure and burdens of war, and to submit to those privations and sacrifices which are necessary for the attainment of its essential and laudable object. Where this anxiety is manifested, without any symptoms of a corresponding desire, on the part of the enemy, it sinks still lower, in the scale of mental degeneracy, from meanness to imbecility; since it removes, to an incalculable distance, the prospect of peace;—it blunts our own sword, while it sharpens the sword of the foe. It was truly remarked, by one of the most acute and intelligent observers of the rise, progress, and consequences, of the French Revolution, that the government of that country placed a great reliance, for the success of their schemes, "on that longing after peace, proclaimed even on the first day of the war, which is a symptom of the failure of all courage, of all reason, of all public spirit,—propagated with indefatigable industry, and in the clamours for which the conspirators, the factious, the revolutionists, of all countries join, echoing the sentiments of the egotists, and of those nations which have not had the fortitude to defend themselves."*

Wisely, most wisely, has the constitution of England placed the power of peace and war in the hands of the Crown; and made it the imperative duty of the Ministers of the Crown to exercise it, to the best of their discretion, without temerity, and without fear; not to plunge us into war, hastily, intemperately, or unnecessarily, on the

* Letter to a Minister of State, by Mallet du Pan.

one hand; nor to be led by popular clamour, and factious discontent, on the other hand, to solicit a premature negotiation, or to conclude an insecure and inadequate peace.—It is for the Minister, who can alone be acquainted with all the facts and circumstances which ought to influence his conduct on such a momentous concern, to fix the proper time for making advances to an enemy; and to prescribe the conditions which the interests of the country may require, and the relative state of the contending parties may authorize him to exact. If he suffer himself to be betrayed into the adoption of a measure of such importance contrary to his own judgment, he virtually surrenders the Royal Prerogative, and resigns the reins of power into the hands of the governed, thereby destroying the very principle and object of government.—Government is bound to restrain the headlong passions of the people, and to reduce them, by the proper exercise of legal authority, to a state of subjection to their real interests. Without the possession of the means of forming a correct judgment, and, too often, without the ability to form it, particularly where the pressure, which a regard for those interests requires, is immediate and certain; while the object which is to give them a permanent security is distant and precarious; the Ministers of the Crown are the guardians and guides which the constitution has provided to inform and to direct them.

On the present occasion, the means adopted, in the King's speech, at the opening of the session, for apprizing the new government of France, that the great impediment to the conclusion of a peace, which had hitherto subsisted, was removed, was sufficient to draw forth from them some avowal, or manifestation, of a pacific disposition, if any such existed. And it was the more necessary that such an avowal should come from them, as the preceding governments had, on various occasions, declared their determination never to make peace, but upon such terms as were utterly incompatible with the security, and even the independence, of other states; and, therefore, without some declaration of sentiment on this subject, it might, and indeed must, be inferred, that they were resolved to adhere to the same principles, and to pursue the same system of foreign policy. But neither this, nor any other of the leading considerations which have been urged above,

could have the smallest influence on the minds of the Opposition;—could produce the smallest relaxation in their efforts to engender, in the public, the same lust for peace which raged within their own bosoms; or could effect the smallest change in their Parliamentary conduct. But Mr. Pitt did not stop even here; he did not wait for a voluntary manifestation of a pacific disposition on the part of the French government; he took direct and active means for ascertaining whether such a disposition really existed, through the medium of Mr. Wickham, the British Minister in Switzerland. Before, however, those means could be carried into effect, the Opposition, with as little regard to the character of the country, as solicitude for the success of the object which they professed to have in view, resolved again to render peace the subject of discussion in Parliament. Accordingly, on the fifteenth of February, Mr. Grey brought forward a motion for an address to the King, stating the desire of the House, that he would be pleased to take such steps, as to his wisdom should appear most proper, for communicating directly, to the executive government of the French Republic, his readiness to meet any disposition to negotiation, on their part, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect. It was the avowed object of this motion to extort from the British government a direct and unconditional acknowledgment of the French Republic; and to compel Ministers to make the first overtures for peace.

The motion was resisted by Mr. Pitt, principally on the grounds of unnecessary and undue interposition with the Constitutional prerogative of the Crown, and of its direct tendency to prevent the conclusion of a just and equitable peace. He informed the House, that Ministers had already adopted every measure consistent with the general interests of the country, and with the attention and regard due to her allies, to enable his Majesty to take any opportunity, either to meet overtures for negotiation, or to make such overtures as might be found most expedient. That no etiquette, with respect to who should make the first overture,—no difficulty in finding a mode of making it, would be considered, by government, as an obstacle to negotiation, if, in other respects, there should appear to be a proba-

bility of its leading to just and honourable terms,—the great point being what prospect there was of obtaining such terms. Measures had been taken for ascertaining these points, and were then in train; and, if the enemy were sincere, they must speedily lead to a negotiation.—Whether such negotiation would end in peace, he could not say, because that depended on the inclination of the enemy to open it with a view to a peace, to be concluded on terms very different from any which their public declarations had, for a long time past, seemed to indicate; if they had no such inclination, a speedy peace was impossible. He wished ardently for peace, but only for an honourable peace;—such a peace the country had a right to expect from its own strength and resources, and from a knowledge of the relative situation of France.

This acknowledgment ought to have deterred Mr. Grey from pressing his motion upon the House, and must have deterred him, if his only object had been to pave the way for a pacific negotiation with France; but as he had those other objects in view, which have been stated above, he persisted in his measure, and, supported by Mr. Fox, pressed it to a division, when it was negatived by one hundred and eighty-nine votes against fifty.

Mr. Pitt, however, continued to pursue the measures to which he had alluded in this debate, for ascertaining the real disposition of the Directorial government, in regard to peace. Early in March, in pursuance of his instructions, Mr. Wickham, the British Minister in Switzerland, applied to Mr. Barthelemi, the French Ambassador at Berne, to know,—I. Whether there was a disposition in France to open a negotiation with his Majesty, and his allies, for the re-establishment of a general peace, upon just and suitable terms, by sending, for that purpose, ministers to a congress, at such place as might thereafter be agreed upon?—II. Whether there existed a disposition to communicate to him the general grounds of a pacification, such as France would be willing to propose, in order that his Majesty, and his allies, might thereupon examine, in concert, whether they were such as might serve as the foundation of a negotiation for peace?—III. Or, whether

there would be a desire to propose any other way whatever, for arriving at the same end,—that of a general pacification ?*

After an interval of nearly three weeks,† Mr. Barthelemi communicated the answer of the Executive Directory, which professed to contain an exposition of their sentiments and dispositions. In this they expressed an ardent desire to procure, for the French Republic, a just, honourable, and solid peace; but declared that the satisfaction which they should have derived from Mr. Wickham's communication, was considerably damped by the circumstance of his not being vested with powers to open a negotiation, which led them to doubt the sincerity of the pacific intentions of the British Court. They chose to consider a congress, though sanctioned by the prescription of ages as the best mode of adjusting the differences of contending powers, and of leading to a fair and solid peace, as calculated only to render all negotiation useless; and to regard, therefore, the proposal for holding it, as another proof of the insincerity of the British Cabinet; and as a mark of their bad faith. After some other preliminary observations in the same strain, now first adopted in a diplomatic correspondence, they proceeded to exhibit a proof of their own ardent desire for peace, by an explicit declaration, that, being charged by the constitution with the execution of the laws, they could neither make, nor listen to, any proposal contrary to them;—the Constitutional Act did not permit them to consent to any alienation of that which, according to the existing laws, constituted the territory of the Republic. But that, in respect of the countries occupied by the French armies, and which had not been united to France, they, as well as other interests, political and commercial, might become the subject of a negotiation, which would present to the Directory the means of proving how much they had at heart the attainment of a speedy peace.

Here the monstrous principle was asserted, that the French Republic had a right to legislate for Europe;—for her laws were now set up as

* See Mr. Wickham's Note of March 8, 1796.

† Mr. Barthelemi's Note of March the 26th.

paramount to the established law of nations, to the most just claims of particular States, and to the national independence of others. In pursuance of this novel principle, the French had only to pour their murderous hordes into the territories of a neutral state, (as they had already done,) conquer it by their arms, and then annex it for ever, by an act of their legislature, to their Republic, one and indivisible;—and any claim for its restoration must be treated as inadmissible, because involving a proposal for violating the laws of France. Here the views of aggrandizement and conquest, which the leaders of the Revolution had early manifested, in violation of their own alleged principle of forbearance and renunciation, were clearly unfolded; and it distinctly appeared, that whatever might be the fate of war, the new rulers of France would make no peace, which had not for its basis the restoration of every conquest made upon themselves, and the retention by them of every place and country which they had wrested from their enemies. It required an effrontery, possessed by no regular government, to proclaim to the world a principle so preposterous; a claim so monstrous; a principle which, if acted upon by every power engaged in a war,—and the power which first asserted such a principle, could not deny the right of another to adopt and pursue it, would produce an endless scene of carnage, and render peace impracticable.

In reply to this exposition, it was observed, that the British Court saw, with regret, how far the tone and spirit of the answer of the Directory, the nature and extent of the demands which it contained, and the manner of announcing them, were remote from any disposition for peace.—The inadmissible pretension had been avowed, of appropriating to France all that the laws actually existing there might have comprised, under the denomination of French territory. Annexed to this demand was an express declaration, that no proposal contrary to it would be made, or even listened to; and this, under the pretence of an internal regulation, the provisions of which were wholly foreign to all other nations. So long as such dispositions were persisted in by the French government, nothing was left for the King but to prosecute a war equally just and necessary. But, whenever his enemies should manifest more pacific sentiments, his Majesty would, at all times, be

eager to concur in them, by lending himself, in concert with his allies, to all such measures as should be best calculated to re-establish general tranquillity, on conditions just, honourable, and permanent, either by the establishment of a congress, which had been so often, and so happily, the means of restoring peace to Europe; or by a preliminary discussion of the principles which might be proposed, on either side, as the foundation of a general pacification; or, lastly, by an impartial examination of any other way, which might be pointed out to him, for arriving at the same salutary end.*

By this explanation, the nation no longer had to rely on the representations of either Ministers or their Opponents, or even on the declarations of the members of the French legislature, for a knowledge of the real intentions, and decided object, of the Directorial government, on the long-agitated question of peace. The Minister had given the most positive proof of the sincerity of his declaration, that the form of government in France would no longer be considered as an obstacle to negotiation, and had reduced the matter to a simple question, of terms. Though, even had England been so depressed as to accede to the exorbitant terms suggested by the enemy, still it would have been a subject of very serious consideration, how far, by such a concession, she would be justified in recognizing the arbitrary principle on which those terms were founded.

The public expences having proved greater than had been expected, Mr. Pitt found it necessary, in the month of April, to raise a new loan of seven millions and a half, one-third of which was necessary to defray the additional charges in the departments of the army and ordnance, including the expence of barracks, up to the close of the present year. The remaining two-thirds were to be applied to the purchase of navy and exchequer bills (which it was proposed to fund) and to the re-payment to the bank of one million, which had been advanced to the government in exchequer bills. This loan had been raised on very favourable terms; the persons who advanced the money

* See *Note of Observation*, dated Downing-Street, April 10, 1796.

having taken the stock at the full market price of the day, with a direct *bonus* of less than two per cent. which, being added to the usual discount for prompt payment, would make the whole benefit three pounds, six shillings and three-pence per cent. The interest of this sum amounted to 575,000*l.*, to which was to be added 135,000*l.*, being the estimated amount of the produce of the tax on printed cottons, which it was deemed expedient to repeal, making a total of 710,000*l.* to be provided. To meet this demand, Mr. Pitt proposed to raise, by a new duty on hats, 100,000*l.*; by a tax upon dogs, 40,000*l.*; and, by an additional duty upon wine of twenty pounds a ton, 600,000*l.* In the discussions which followed these proposals, many arguments were used, tending to impeach the accuracy of the Minister's calculations; and many specimens of wit were exhibited, calculated, and designed, to gratify the speakers, and to amuse the House. The House, however, afforded their sanction to his statements, and to the measures which he proposed; and the bills which he introduced, for giving them effect, were adopted by large and decisive majorities.

As it was generally understood that Parliament would separate early in the season, and that it would be dissolved in the course of the summer; the leaders of the Opposition resolved not to suffer the interval to elapse without again endeavouring to excite a public odium against the Ministers. They seem, indeed, to have had so little knowledge of the duty of a representative, as to have adopted the idea that it consisted solely in making incessant attempts to disgrace the Members of Administration by the foulest aspersions on their characters, and to fetter the operations of government, by a systematic opposition to all their measures.—No men, certainly, could have been more solicitous to discharge such a duty, than the present chiefs of the Whig-party; who, careless of the *means*, and anxious only about the *end*, displayed the most indefatigable perseverance in the pursuit of their object.

In conformity with this principle of action, Mr. Grey brought forward, on the sixth of May, a string of resolutions, for the avowed

purpose of supplying a basis for the impeachment of Ministers. The charge from which so serious an inference was to be drawn, was the appropriation of public money to one object, which had been specifically voted for another. This charge was fully met by Mr. Pitt, who admitted the fact to a certain extent, but justified the departure from the strict letter of the act of appropriation, by the example of almost every administration in every war since the Revolution, and by the imperative exigencies of the public service. The resolutions were supported, of course, by Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan, but the previous question, moved by Mr. Steele, was carried by 200 votes against 38. —The last effort of this kind, during the session, was made by Mr. Fox, four days after this debate. On that occasion, he took a view of the origin and progress of the war; of the conduct and policy of Ministers; and of the motives and principles which he alleged to have actuated them in all their public proceedings. He delivered a very able and masterly speech, highly sophistical indeed, but much more temperate than usual. He pleaded the cause of the French with considerable art; impeached, like them, the sincerity of Ministers in their professions of a pacific disposition; and improved upon the objections started by the Directory to the mode adopted of ascertaining their sentiments, respecting a general peace.—As one decisive proof of their insincerity, in his mind, he instanced the delay which had occurred between the King's message of the eighth of December, and the first note from Mr. Wickham to Mr. Barthelemi, on the eighth of March, an interval of three months. He contended, that, at the very outset of even an attempt to negotiate, the Ministers should have made a full and unequivocal recognition of the French Republic! And, forgetting, that the object of Ministers was to ascertain, in the first instance, whether the French were really disposed to treat,—and be it recollected, that there was the greatest reason to believe, from all the public declarations of the leading men in France, and from the whole of their conduct, from the deposition and murder of their Sovereign to the present moment, that there existed no such disposition in the French government,—he condemned them for not having given full powers to Mr. Wickham to negotiate a treaty. Never was an

argument so weak as this to prove the insincerity of Ministers;—it might become, indeed, the shuffling and equivocating members of the French Directory to use it, in order to deceive the credulous multitude whom they governed; but it was wholly unworthy so acute and able a politician as Mr. Fox.—If the Directory had, in answer to Mr. Wickham's application, declared, generally, that they were ready to treat with England, and her allies, so soon as proper persons should be appointed for that purpose, vested with the usual powers; or had stated, more particularly, some one of the usual grounds on which nations are accustomed to treat with each other; and any unnecessary delay had taken place, on the part of the British Ministers, in carrying their avowed intention into effect, by appointing a Minister to conduct the negotiation, there would, indeed, have existed good reason for impeaching their sincerity. But it would have been the height of folly to appoint a Minister Plenipotentiary before they knew whether the French would consent to negotiate on any admissible terms, or even whether they would receive him at all. It would have exposed the representative of our Sovereign to be treated with contempt, by rebels and regicides, and have subjected the nation to the greatest insult which could have been offered to her; it would have dishonoured and degraded her in the eyes of Europe.

Having assumed facts which had no real existence, Mr. Fox proceeded to draw from them his own conclusions. He justified the assertion of the French Directory, that the pretended offers of the British Ministers were produced by the pressure of circumstances, and made with a view rather of continuing, than of concluding, the war. He admitted, that the pretence set up by the French, that they could not restore any territory which had been consolidated with the Republic was unjust; but it did not produce its natural effect, by opening his eyes to the insatiate ambition, and destructive views, of the French rulers: it only served to increase his indignation against the Ministers, who, he affirmed, had brought us into this lamentable situation, who had deferred any proposition for peace till a period when the difficulties were such, that *there was no prospect of obtaining*

it on safe and honourable terms.—Their object was to delay overtures of peace, till *they could not be accepted*, and they had succeeded.*

No change had certainly taken place in the affairs of Europe, since the delivery of the King's Message, in December; of course, nothing had occurred since to raise those difficulties, which, according to Mr. Fox, rendered a safe and honourable peace impracticable.—The same difficulties, then, must have existed at that period. Yet Mr. Fox, in his speech on the Message, used every argument which his reason could suggest, to urge Ministers to enter into an immediate negotiation for peace.†—Nay, so impatient was he of all delay, in opening a negotiation, however necessary, that he returned to the charge on the 15th of February, and enforced the same arguments with additional energy. He then expressed his conviction, that this country might obtain from France honourable terms of peace.‡ "The Governors of France," said he, "dare not refuse any reasonable terms which we may offer; or, if they do, others will soon be appointed in their places, who will dare to accept of them."—But he was persuaded, that if a disposition to peace, on our part, was made known to France, *her concessions would be as ample as we could wish.*

Our disposition to peace had unquestionably been made sufficiently known to France, whose public papers noticed our parliamentary proceedings on the Royal Message; and, had any doubt still remained, the overture made by the Ministers, through the medium of Mr. Wickham, must have effectually removed it; for, whatever faction may invent, or party assert, one nation does not ask another to propose a basis for a negotiation without being previously disposed to negotiate herself. Mr. Fox, then, must either have urged the Ministers to negotiate at a time when he believed there existed insuperable difficulties in the way of a safe and honourable peace; in which case, he must have belied the sentiments of his own heart, and have spoken against the conviction of his own mind; or he must have now admitted, that

* Woodfall's Reports, May 10, 1796, p. 487.
† Idem, December 9, p. 369. ‡ Idem, February 15, p. 87.

the difficulties which he stated to exist at present, arose out of the ungovernable ambition of the French rulers; for, certainly, between the period at which the King's Message was delivered, and between the fifteenth of February, and the eighth of March, Ministers had made no one declaration, had performed no one act, which could raise a difficulty which did not exist before, or which could afford even a pretext to the French Directory, for increasing the exorbitancy of their demands.—Yet, as Mr. Fox asserted that Ministers had purposely delayed overtures of peace *till they could not be accepted;* and as he had maintained, only three weeks before they were made, that they would be met by ample concessions on the part of France, it followed, of course, that something must have intervened between the fifteenth of February, and the eighth of March, to render it impossible for the French to accept our pacific overtures. This *something*, which had eluded the vigilance of every political observer, it behoved him to produce, as the only means of justifying his own assertion, and of exempting him from the imputation of hypocrisy and falsehood. At all events, the conduct of France, having been so totally different from that which he had most confidently predicted it would be, should, at least, have produced the salutary effect of moderating the strength of his affirmations, of tempering the violence of his zeal, and of weakening his reliance on his own judgment, on all subjects connected with the affairs of that country, and the principles and disposition of her rulers.

The only remedy which Mr. Fox could suggest, for all the varied calamities into which the country was plunged, was a total change, not only in the councils of his Majesty, but in his counsellors. This he represented as an act of imperious necessity, since it was absurd to suppose, *after their recent conduct*, that they had abandoned those principles of action which had produced so many misfortunes. They had not, in any way, manifested such a change.*—The only instance of their recent conduct, which could have drawn down, on the heads of Ministers, this heavy censure, was the adoption of a measure which

* Woodfall's Reports, May 10, p. 488.

Mr. Fox, himself, had always most strenuously insisted upon,—the manifestation of a disposition to treat with the present government of France,—and which he had specifically declared to be a proof of the change which he now so peremptorily stated not to have taken place. In the debate on the Message, on the 9th of December, he opened his speech with a declaration, that there was one thing which must give him pleasure,—*he must congratulate the House, and the Country, on the complete change which had happily taken place in the language, and in the system, of government.** It would appear, then, that, though Mr. Fox so confidently inferred this change from the declaration of his Majesty, of the eighth of December, that such a state of things had actually occurred in France, as would induce him to meet any disposition to peace, on the part of the French rulers,—the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers, in the March following, in taking means, in pursuance of that declaration, for ascertaining whether such a disposition did really exist, supplied him with a proof, that the change which he had triumphantly proclaimed in December, had not yet occurred.

In order to obviate a conclusion, which might very naturally be drawn from his avowal, that nothing but a change of measures, and of men, could save the country, he declared, that his return to power was entirely out of the question. The maxims which had been adopted, and acted upon, in the course of the present war, and the principles which were then countenanced, made it altogether impossible for him to aspire to any situation of responsibility. Those maxims and principles must be all retracted and reversed, the two late acts, which he continued to think subversive of the constitution, repealed, and the precedent declared to be pernicious; and there must be a full and perfect conviction in his Majesty's mind, and in that of the people,—that all these measures were wrong, before men, who loved and venerated the constitution, could think of holding any public situation.

These, and all the sentiments which, on the various topics which his speech embraced, he had, at different times, promulgated, had

* Woodfall's Reports, December 9, p. 265.

been reduced into the form of resolutions which he now proposed to the House to adopt; although, by so doing, they would act in contradiction to their recorded opinions. Mr. Pitt condemned, under the present circumstances of the country, all retrospective inquiries as useless and dangerous; though he briefly exposed the gross inaccuracies of Mr. Fox's statement, relative to past transactions, and to the imputed sentiments and conduct of Ministers. At the periods to which Mr. Fox alluded, when he charged him with having neglected opportunities of making peace, he declared, that every motive of public duty, and every consideration of personal ease, had induced him to exert the best of his endeavours to promote a peace, by which alone his favourite object of the redemption of the national debt, and other financial projects, which he had much at heart, could be promoted. The failure was owing entirely to the enemy. He commented on the inconsistency of Mr. Fox, who wished him to go to war to prevent the partition of Poland; when Mr. Fox had resisted, to the utmost, his attempts to prevent the dismemberment of Turkey, though *those attempts had, for their object, to prevent that very partition of Poland* which was now so much inveighed against.* Mr. Pitt complained of having the warm and unguarded expressions of individuals adopted as the declarations of the Ministers themselves. Thus many things, which had fallen from that great man, Mr. Burke, had since been stated as the solemn decisions of government; though it was known that, to a certain extent, there was a difference between the Ministers and that gentleman, on the object of the war. That Ministers wished to treat with a government in which Jacobin principles should not prevail, that they wished for a government from which they could hope for security, and that they thought a monarchy the most likely *form* of government to afford them these advantages, was, most undoubtedly, true; but that Ministers ever had an idea of continuing the war for the purpose of establishing the old government of France, with all its abuses, he solemnly denied.

The charge of insincerity, in the overtures lately made to the French Directory, through Mr. Wickham, which Mr. Fox had pressed very

* Woodfall's Reports, May 10, p. 498.

strongly on the House, was examined, by Mr. Pitt, with great minuteness. On the inference drawn from the length of the interval which was suffered to elapse between the King's message and Mr. Wickham's first note, it was remarked, that no intention had been expressed, by the British government, to be the first in making proposals for opening a negotiation. The fair construction, and obvious purport, of the message, went no further than to invite the enemy to make the first advances, if they were so disposed, and to shew that no obstacle would be opposed, on our part, to the capacity of the government which they had chosen to negotiate terms with this country. Further than this the Ministers had not gone; and, therefore, whatever the wishes of certain persons might have led them to expect, there was no room for disappointment, and no ground for censure, afforded by their forbearance to go further.

The insincerity of the overtures at Basil had also been inferred from the supposed want of co-operation with our allies.—The Opposition, however, were as much mistaken in their facts as they were in their inferences; for the overtures were not made without previous communication with our allies, and we acted in concert with them, though they were not formally made parties to the proposal, a ceremony which was considered as wholly superfluous.

As to the imputed insincerity arising out of the non-recognition of the Republic, it was remarked to be truly generous in Mr. Fox to find out an objection for the French which they had not discovered themselves.—In the answer of the Directory to the British note, not the least notice had been taken of this circumstance. It was evident, therefore, that *they* laid no stress on the omission; that *they* regarded it as no insult. But Mr. Fox always displayed great sensibility on the point of recognition, and seemed to have it very much at heart. He had even asserted, that, if this mark of attention and respect had been paid to the French government, it would have induced them, in return, to propose more moderate terms; but he was singular in an opinion for which he had no foundation whatever; and he must be aware, too, that

the mere proposal to treat in itself implied a recognition of the authority of the party with whom the treaty was to be concluded.

It had been alleged, as a farther proof of insincerity, that we did not propose terms to the enemy, while we called upon them to propose terms to us.—But, as the application did not come from the enemy, but had been made by the British Cabinet, it would have been ridiculous to propose any particular terms until they were previously informed whether the French were disposed to treat at all.—Again, it had been urged, that we must have been insincere, since the Minister, who was employed to make the overture, was not authorized to negotiate. But Mr. Pitt remarked, that it was extraordinary indeed, that such an observation should come from any one who professed to have the slightest knowledge of diplomatic proceedings; and he asked Mr. Fox, whether it was ever known, that the person employed to sound the disposition of a belligerent party was also considered as the proper Minister for discussing all the relative interests, and for concluding a treaty? Mr. Fox himself had formerly advised the adoption of expedients for sounding the disposition of the enemy through the medium of neutral powers. As soon as France had adopted a form of government, from which an expectation of stability was to be drawn, Ministers readily waved all etiquette, and would not let such forms stand in the way of the permanent object of the peace and tranquillity of Europe, and they made direct proposals to the enemy. Had they, however, adopted the expedient suggested to them, and employed a neutral power to make their communications, was it to be expected that we should appoint that neutral power our Minister Plenipotentiary to manage our interests, as well as those of our allies? Ministers had another motive for not employing the same Minister who made the advances as the negotiator of a peace; they wished to shew our allies that we did not go beyond the line of that arrangement which had been concerted with them, and that, true to our engagements, we had no separate object, and would not proceed a step without their concurrence. They wished to avoid any thing which could create the slightest suspicion that they were disposed to a separate negotiation,

which it had been the uniform aim of France to produce, during the whole of the present contest. This was a policy which had been but too successfully practised on some of the allies of Great Britain, and had enabled her to exact from them, successively, more harsh and unequal conditions than she could have imposed, had all the belligerent powers treated in concert. It was with a view to the same dealing that the Ministers had thought proper to publish, to the different courts of Europe, the message, and the answer, that the world might judge of the moderation of the allies, and the arrogance of the enemy.

In answer to the objections against a congress, urged by the Directory themselves, Mr. Pitt observed, that this mode of negotiation had been pointed out by Ministers, because it was the only mode in which wars had been concluded in all cases in which allies had been concerned, ever since the peace of Munster, the two last treaties only excepted.—In reply to Mr. Fox's remark, that the Directory were only high in their terms, because they knew that the British Ministers were not in earnest; and that they would be moderate and candid, if convinced of their sincerity; he conceived that the extravagance of their demands led to an opposite conclusion, and proved that the plea of insincerity was, with them, only a pretext. If they really thought Ministers insincere, it would have been their policy to propose just and moderate claims, the rejection of which would supply a proof of that want of candour, and of that appetite for war, which Mr. Fox joined the French in so unjustly ascribing to the British government. But having, in fact, no disposition for peace, and led away by false and aspiring notions of aggrandizement, the rulers of France offered such terms as they knew could not possibly be accepted.—Did they know the spirit, temper, and character, of this country, when they presumed to make such arrogant proposals? Those proposals, Mr. Pitt declared, he would leave to the silent sense impressed by them on the breast of every Englishmen. He thanked his God, that he was addressing himself to Britons, who were acquainted with the presumption of the enemy,—and who, conscious of their own resources, impelled by their native spirit, and valuing the national character, would prefer the chances and vicissitudes of war, to such unjust, unequal, and humiliating conditions.

As to the plea of the French Directory, that their constitution did not permit them to accept any terms which should diminish the extent of country, annexed by conquest to the territories of the Republic, Mr. Fox had, himself, condemned it as unjust, and as opposing an eternal obstacle to peace, should it be persevered in; but at the same time, unwilling to believe that any thing so unjust should have the sanction of the rulers of his favourite Republic, he was disposed to believe it was only a pretext. That the interests of foreign countries should yield to those laws which a State should think proper to prescribe to itself, was truly represented, by Mr. Pitt, to be a fallacy, a monster in politics, that was never before heard of.—If, however, it were merely a pretext, it was singular that Mr. Fox, who seemed so shocked at this law of the French constitution, should direct none of his censure against the Legislators, or government, of that nation; but vent all his indignation on the British Ministers, for deferring their proposals for peace till the enemy had formed such a constitution as rendered peace impracticable.—The Minister expressly declared, that the exhorbitant demands of the enemy would never induce the British Cabinet to forego those moderate and pacific sentiments which they had always professed;—and that, whenever the French should be disposed to descend, from the high and commanding tone which they had assumed, to fair and reasonable views, the Ministers would be ready to treat with them. On a division, the resolutions* of Mr. Fox were rejected by two hundred and sixteen votes, and supported only by forty-two. The King prorogued the Parliament on the 19th of May, and the following day it was dissolved by proclamation.

It was at this precise point of time, that the armistice, which had been concluded in the preceding year, between the Austrian and French generals, was terminated by a notice from the former; and hostilities accordingly began on the 31st of May. The event of this campaign has been most grossly misrepresented, not merely by French writers, but by English writers also, who, founding their narratives entirely on the reports of the French commanders, which are mostly

* See these Resolutions, Appendix A.

drawn up for the purpose of deception, and without the smallest regard to truth, have strangely perverted facts, and misled the public by most erroneous statements. At the opening of the campaign, the force of the two French armies, destined for service in Germany, under Moreau and Jourdan, amounted to more than 160,000 men; while the Imperial forces, under the Archduke Charles, including the Saxons, and other contingents of the Empire, were something under 150,000.*— The avowed object of the French was to penetrate into Germany, for the double purpose of subduing the power of Austria, and of maintaining their troops without any expence to themselves. This, indeed, had become necessary; for the treasury of the Republic had been completely exhausted; and all the intermediate country, between the boundary of ancient France and the Rhine, had been so totally impoverished and drained, by the tyrannical exactions of the French generals and commissioners, that it was now wholly inadequate to the support of an army. Germany, therefore, was considered as a land hitherto untouched, and affording abundant resources to the famished hordes which the French Directory were prepared to pour into it. It was the obvious policy of the Austrian Cabinet, which was aware of these intentions, to act, particularly with an inferior force, on the defensive, with a view to prevent the French from gaining any footing on the German side of the Rhine. The Aulic Council of War, however, determined on a different course of proceeding.

The first hostile movement was made by Jourdan, who commanded the army of the Sambre and Meuse. On the first of June, Kleber, who acted under Jourdan, attacked the Austrians, under the Prince of Wirtemberg, who was stationed in front of the river Sieg, with a very superior force. The action lasted several hours, but the Austrians, after sustaining a severe loss, were compelled to retire behind the Sieg, and to take up a strong position at Uckerath, which, however, they soon quitted, and retreated to Altenkirchen.—Here they were attacked, on the fourth of June, and completely routed, by the superior numbers of the enemy. According to the French accounts, the

* The History of the Campaign of 1796, in Germany and Italy, p. 3, 4.

Austrians lost, in these two actions, 5,400 men.—They now retired behind the Lahn, while the opposite banks of that river were occupied by fifty thousand French. The Archduke Charles had, during this time, been making a fruitless diversion in the Palatinate and the Hunsdruck; but perceiving the danger to which the Prince of Wirtemberg was exposed, he hastened to his assistance, with the greater part of his army. He passed the Lahn, on the fifteenth of June, attacked the French in a very advantageous position, from which he ultimately drove them with great loss, and, following up his victory, he pursued them, from post to post, till they retreated to the Sieg, taking most of their artillery, provisions, and baggage. Jourdan, meanwhile, had passed the Rhine, on the twelfth of June, at Neuwied, to support Kleber, but the masterly manœuvres of the Archduke compelled him to re-trace his steps on the eighteenth. At the same time, the Austrian vanguard, of 11,000 men, commanded by General Kray, was sent forward in pursuit of Kleber, who, with 25,000 men, was retiring towards the Sieg. On the twentieth of June, Kray came up with the French, who, relying on their superior numbers, and confident of victory, attacked him with great vigour; but the extraordinary bravery of three Austrian battalions, who charged nine French battalions with the bayonet, decided the fortune of the day in favour of the Germans, who drove the French from the field, after killing, wounding, and taking, two-and-twenty hundred of them.—This affair was the more honourable to the Austrians, as the enemy had more than double their number. Kleber, despairing of making any further stand against the victorious Archduke, continued his retreat to Dusseldorf.

During these transactions, on the Lower Rhine, Moreau had attacked the Austrian positions on the Upper Rhine. General Wurmser, who commanded them, had established himself in an advantageous post, before the fort of the Rhine, opposite to Manheim. From this position the French made two vain attempts to dislodge him, on the fourteenth and twentieth of June.—But these were mere feints to conceal a project of greater importance.

Accordingly, Moreau having left a small force to watch the Austrian

intrenchments, marched, on the twenty-first of June, with great rapidity, towards Strasburgh. At this critical juncture, the disasters, which the Austrians had experienced in Italy, induced the Court of Vienna to order a strong detachment of their army on the Rhine, to repair, without delay, to that country. General Wurmser, with 30,000 men, hastened to obey this order, which left the French a decisive superiority in Germany, and, in fact, opened to them the gates of the country. Moreau, by the treachery of some Austrian officer, was early apprized of this intended movement, and, with his usual activity, resolved to profit by it. Early on the morning of the twenty-fourth of June, he attacked the important fort of Kehl, opposite to Strasburgh, with a force so totally inadequate to its reduction, as to afford strong grounds for suspecting, that he had some understanding with the garrison. With a degree of folly wholly unaccountable, the defence of this fort had been entrusted to a body of Suabian troops,* ill-disciplined, and worse commanded. They made no defence; and the French, having obtained possession of the fort, lost not a moment in putting it in such a state as to bid defiance to any future attack.

Moreau now crossed the Rhine with his army, 80,000 strong, and divided it into three columns.—The right column, under General Ferino, was employed to drive back, into the Brisgaw, the corps of Emigrants, under the gallant Prince of Condè, and the corps of General Frolich. The centre, under St. Cyr, pressed forwards towards the Suabian mountains, and secured the important positions of Kniebis and Frydenstadt, through the treachery of the Suabian general. The left column, under Desaix, was immediately opposed to the Austrian force, now commanded by M. de Latour, which he attacked at the beginning of July, and drove beyond Rastadt. Moreau, having joined Desaix, attacked Latour on the 5th of July, who was posted advantageously in front of the river Murg. The action lasted the whole day, and terminated to the disadvantage of the Austrians, who, the following day, made good their retreat to Ettlingen. At this place

* A General Stein, who commanded these troops, was openly accused of having delivered up not only Kehl, but two other strong positions, to the French, for a considerable sum of money.—See History of the Campaign of 1796, p. 194.

the Archduke Charles, who had compelled the army of the Sambre and Meuse to re-cross the Rhine and the Sieg, having left 30,000 men, under General Wartensleben, to watch their motions, joined Latour, with the remainder of his force, and took the command of the whole. But no sooner had the Archduke left the Lower Rhine, than Jourdan again prepared for offensive operations; and, having 65,000 men to oppose to the 30,000, under Wartensleben, he drove the Austrians, after an obstinate resistance, from post to post, took possession of Frankfort, on the 14th of July, and, moving forwards, threatened to place the Archduke between two victorious armies.

The Archduke, to prevent the accomplishment of this scheme, had resolved to hazard a general action, on the 10th, in the neighbourhood of Ettlingen; but while he was making the necessary dispositions for this purpose, on the 9th, his whole line was unexpectedly attacked by the French.—General Keim, who commanded the left of the Austrian line, and who had not yet been joined by some Saxon regiments destined to reinforce him, sustained four successive assaults with the greatest bravery; but, a fifth being made with fresh troops, he was ultimately compelled to give way, and to retire to Pfortsheim, where he met the Saxons. The Archduke, meanwhile, had been completely successful in repulsing the enemy, on his right and in front. But the retreat of Keim obliged him to forego his advantages, and to move back to Pfortsheim. Before, however, the Archduke and Wartensleben retreated, they had adopted the precaution of throwing strong garrisons into the fortresses on the Rhine;—five-and-twenty thousand men were left, in Ehrenbreisten and Mentz on the Lower Rhine; and in Philipsburgh and Manheim, on the Upper Rhine.

The centre of the French army, meeting with little opposition from the troops of Wirtemberg and Suabia, advanced into the heart of the former Duchy, and entered Stutgard, on the 18th of July. On that day the French made an attempt to carry the post of Canstadt, commanded by General Baillet, brother to Latour, and at the same time attacked a body of Austrians, under Prince John of Lichtenstein, at Essingen; the Austrians conducted themselves with great gallantry on

this occasion, and defeated the French, with the loss of 1500 men. —On the 19th, the Archduke crossed the Neker, and, about the same time, General Wartensleben, who had continued his retreat, through Franconia, arrived at Wurtsburg, on a line with the front of the Archduke's force; and from this time the march of the two armies became more regular and better combined.

The Imperial army now commenced a methodical retreat. It was formed into three divisions, amounting to nearly 80,000 men;—the first of which, about 25,000 strong, and under Wartensleben, was opposed to the army of Jourdan, which amounted to 55,000. The Archduke, with 40,000 men, was posted upon the Neker, which he defended against Moreau, who had upwards of 50,000 under his command. The third corps, of 15,000, was divided between the Prince of Condè and General Frolich, and defended the Upper Danube against Ferino, at the head of 20,000 men. It is evident, from this statement, that the superiority of the French over the Austrians was greater at this period than it was at the beginning of the campaign.

The French now found themselves in a rich country, abounding with every thing of which they stood so much in need. They levied heavy contributions, of all kinds, on the inhabitants; and they compelled the petty Princes in the circle of Suabia, and in the neighbouring districts, who had not spirit to defend their country, to purchase of them treaties of peace at a dear rate. The Archduke continued to retreat slowly, and disputing every inch of ground, in order to give time to the Court of Vienna to send him reinforcements. He was frequently successful in his partial attacks on the posts of the enemy, who had, however, by the beginning of August, approached very near to the frontiers of Bohemia and Bavaria. On the 11th of that month, an action was fought, near Mettingen, in which the Archduke displayed great judgment, gallantry, and prudence. The left wing of the Austrians, under General Riese, turned the right of the enemy, advanced twelve miles upon their rear, and took a great number of prisoners; but their right wing having sustained a check, and the Archduke having

received intelligence of the retreat of Wartensleben, who had been compelled to retire to Amberg, and who was therefore in danger of being separated entirely from him, he stopped the pursuit of the flying French, and encamped for the night on the ground which he had occupied before the action, in which the enemy lost 3,000 men, and the Austrians 1500.

On the 13th of August, the Archduke crossed the Danube at Donauwert, leaving, however, two detachments on the left side of that river to occupy the roads from Nordlingen and Hœchstadt to Donauwert. Hitherto every thing had succeeded, with the exception of partial checks, to the most sanguine expectations of the French, who had reason to flatter themselves with the final accomplishment of their grand design;—the union of three large and victorious armies, in the heart of Germany, and the conquest of the hereditary States of the House of Austria.—The moment was critical.—The French were already masters of the whole of Suabia and Franconia; Jourdan was directing his march towards the Danube, and threatened, at once, Bohemia and Upper Austria. Moreau had reached the frontiers of Bavaria; his right wing occupied the important posts of Bregentz; and was advancing into the Tyrol; into which country Buonaparté, having subdued all opposition in Italy, hoped to extend his victorious career.

At this crisis, the Archduke Charles exhibited unequivocal proofs of a great mind, which seemed to derive additional vigour from increased danger; and to furnish resources adequate to every exigency. He was fully aware that not a moment was to be lost;—that some decisive measure should be immediately adopted,—and some great effort made, to rescue Austria from impending destruction.—Having lately received some reinforcements, which diminished the relative disparity of the two armies, he resolved to make a bold and desperate attempt to prevent the junction of Moreau and Jourdan, by attacking one of them with the greater part of his force, and to risk every thing in order to produce its total defeat and dispersion. For this purpose he left a part of his army, under General Latour, to defend Bavaria, and to guard the river Lech; and, having recalled all his divisions

from the opposite side of the Danube, on the 15th, he ordered the bridge of Donauwert to be burnt, and stationed twenty thousand of his best troops in that town. The next day he marched rapidly along the right bank of the Danube, and, on the 17th, crossed that river at Neustadt and Ingoldstadt, leaving a garrison in the last place, which was capable of being defended. Turning to the right, in consequence of some information which he received of Wartensleben's retreat to Schwartzenfeld, he reached Hemman on the 20th. Having established his communication with Wartensleben, his vanguard, under General Nauendorf, attacked and defeated a column of the French, under Bernadotte, on the 22d, at the village of Taswang, within a few miles of Ratisbon. The van column was again attacked the next day by General Hotze, and the Archduke, and driven back to Altdorf. Having thus gained ground on the rear of Jourdan's army, the Archduke laid the plan for a general attack on the French, on the 24th of August; but Jourdan, being apprized of Bernadotte's defeat, abandoned all his posts, with precipitation, on the night of the 23d, and retreated to Amberg. Here he was attacked, the next day, and driven back to Sultzbach; and continued his retreat, without intermission, to the Mein, which he crossed at Eltman and Hallstadt, on the 30th; and, at length, halted near Lauringen and Schweinfurt. So rapid was this retreat, or rather *flight*, of Jourdan that the Archduke was prevented from overtaking the main body of his army, though the Austrian light troops harassed him greatly on his march, intercepted his couriers, and took part of his baggage. The Archduke, however, by his masterly movements, contrived to reach Nuremberg, with one column of his army, before the French, by which Jourdan was compelled to re-pass the Mein, and to abandon all hopes of effecting a junction with Moreau, or of receiving any assistance from him. The Archduke, indeed, had taken the precaution of detaching 10,000 men, under General Nauendorf, on the 25th of August, to strengthen De Latour's corps, and to prevent Moreau from making any powerful diversion in favour of Jourdan.

Without the smallest relaxation of his activity, the Archduke still pressed forward, and, by another skilful manœuvre, reached Wurtz-

burg before the French, who, after a vain attempt to dislodge him, retired to Kornach, a position three leagues distant from Wurtzburg. Here at last, Jourdan resolved to make a stand, and to risk an action, before he abandoned a country, which it had cost him so much labour, and so many lives, to gain. He posted himself, very advantageously, on a chain of hills, partly covered with wood, and part of them having the river Mein at their feet. These hills terminated in a plain, in which his cavalry was posted. While another division, under General Lefebvre, covered the road from Schweinfurt to Fulde. In this position, the Archduke attacked him on the second of September; and, after a steady resistance for several hours, the Austrian grenadiers forced their way through the wood, amidst an incessant fire, charged the French with fixed bayonet, on the tops of the hills, and, in a few minutes, dislodged them from every post.—Jourdan's retreat soon degenerated into a flight, and nothing but the approach of night, and the excessive fatigue of the Austrians, saved his army from total destruction. His loss, in this action, amounted to 5,000 men, besides ten pieces of cannon, and a vast number of baggage and provision waggons, which fell into the hands of the victors. The Austrians, on their part, lost only 800 men.

Jourdan continued his retreat towards the Upper Lahn, across the country of Fulda and Weteravia. He reached the Westlaer on the 9th of September. Never was retreat more rapid, nor more disorderly;—the army, having no regular supply of provisions, fled in all directions, plundering, and laying waste, the countries through which they passed. Incessantly harassed by the Austrians, and by the peasantry, their numbers were not less diminished by fatigue and desertion than by the sword; and their loss, between the Naab and the Lahn, was estimated at upwards of 20,000 men.

Still closely pressed by the enemy, Jourdan pursued his retreat from the Lahn to the Sieg. On the 20th of September, the vanguard of the Austrian army, under General Hotze, came up with the rear-guard of the French, under Marçeau, near Hochsteinbach; which he defeated, and took a great number of prisoners. General Marçeau received a

mortal wound in the action, and died the next day. Two divisions of the French army finally passed the Rhine at Cologne, while the main body fled for safety to the entrenched camp before Dusseldorf. Thus ended the disastrous retreat of General Jourdan; a retreat of more than one hundred leagues; in the course of which he lost nearly one-half of his army, and was driven, in twenty-five days, from the frontiers of Bohemia to the walls of Dusseldorf. Very different had been the masterly retreat of Wartensleben, who, with 25,000 men, opposed to 50,000, disputed every inch of ground, sustained no signal defeat, and was nearly two months in retiring from the Sieg to the Naab.*

Moreau, whom the Archduke Charles had left on the confines of Bavaria, was not apprized of that Prince's departure from the banks of the Danube, till he was far advanced in his pursuit of Jourdan. The moment, however, he became acquainted with the fact, he resolved, as the Archduke had foreseen, to attack General Latour, in the hope of creating such a diversion as would effectually secure Jourdan from danger.—On the 24th of August, he crossed the river Lech, drove the Austrians from all their posts, and obliged them to retire to another position, between the Lech and the Iser. This passage of the Lech opened Bavaria to the incursions of the French, and gave them possession of a fertile country, abounding in every thing necessary for support, and desirable for plunder. Moreau, exulting in the imaginary success of his project, filled the Directory with the same false hopes which he indulged himself, of compelling the Archduke to abandon his victorious pursuit of the flying army of the Sambre and Meuse.—That wise Prince, however, contented himself, as has been seen, with detaching ten thousand men, under General Nauendorf, to reinforce Latour, who was, by that means, enabled to defend himself in his new position, and to prevent the enemy from penetrating beyond the Iser.

After the passage of the Lech, Moreau continued to advance for some days, when he took a position with his right at Dachau, his

* History of the Campaign of 1796, p. 71.

centre at Paffenhosen, and his left at Bombach. In assuming this position, Moreau, considering the relative situation of the Austrians, displayed a degree of ignorance, not easily accounted for in a commander, whose military talents have never been called in question; for his left was exposed to an advantageous attack by the Austrian corps posted at Ingoldstadt, on the Danube; and his centre could not advance upon Ratisbon without being taken in flank by the Austrian division at Landshut. In order to remedy, in some degree, the effects of his own imprudence, he resolved to dislodge the Austrians from the *Tête de Pont* at Ingoldstadt. The first of September was the day fixed for the execution of this plan; but it was rendered entirely abortive, by the prudence and vigour of Generals Nauendorf and Mercantin, who, while Moreau was proceeding to Ingoldstadt, attacked the other part of his army, and compelled him to return to its protection, though too late to prevent its defeat. At the same time, General Latour was attacked by the French, in his position, opposite to Munich; but he soon forced them to retreat. In the actions of this day, both sides claimed the victory;—the loss, indeed, was nearly equal; and neither army returned to its former position, but the Austrians were so far successful, that they frustrated the enemy's project.

At this period, the Elector of Bavaria purchased a separate peace from the French, at the expence of about four hundred thousand pounds sterling, and an immense quantity of clothes, provisions and horses, besides twenty of his best pictures;—a new species of contribution which these Republican freebooters did not fail to levy, wherever their arms were successful.—Thus, by the invasion of Bavaria, the French succeeded in detaching another Prince from the Germanic Confederacy, and in weakening the force of the Imperial army.—But never was advantage more dearly bought, for it occasioned the loss of Jourdan's army, while it exposed that of Moreau to the most imminent danger of destruction.

Moreau, at length, became sensible of this danger; on the tenth of September, he ordered a large body of cavalry to repass the Danube; and, the next day, he quitted his position on the Iser, in order to

follow them; but, in the execution of this manœuvre, his rear-guard was vigorously attacked, in the vicinity of Munich, by the Prince of Furstenberg, and General Frolich, who killed and took upwards of two thousand men.—He retired towards Neuburg, and recalled General Desaix, who had taken a forward position beyond the Danube. — But Desaix, on his return, was attacked, by General Nauendorf, on the fourteenth, when his rear-guard suffered considerably, and a thousand of them fell into the hands of the victorious Austrians. The French General now perceived the necessity of effecting his retreat with all possible expedition. The Austrians had received considerable reinforcement from the Hereditary States; they had already turned both flanks of the French, and pressed them very closely, while a corps, commanded by General Petrarch, formed by a portion of the garrisons of Phillipsburg and Manheim, and ten squadrons of light cavalry, detached by the Archduke, had entered the Margraviate of Baden; and, after taking the Fort of Kehl, and losing it again by imprudence and carelessness, secured the valley of Kintzig, and the defile of Kniebis, took all the magazines which the French had established in the Duchy of Wirtemberg, intercepted their convoys and couriers, and cut off their communication with Strasburg. Moreau's situation was, at this period, truly critical; and it was rendered more so, by the animosity of the Suabian peasants, (the principal passes of whose country were already in possession of the Austrians,) who, having experienced from the French troops every species of cruelty, insult, and oppression, were prepared to exact a severe retribution, whenever a reverse of fortune should afford them the opportunity. General Latour had divided his army into several different corps; and Moreau, aware that he must fight and conquer before he could safely retreat, resolved to attack them separately. Accordingly, on the thirtieth of September, he began the execution of this plan, by attacking the main division under Latour; but he was repulsed with loss. On the following night, however, he renewed the attack, with greater advantage. Two of the Imperial Generals were taken by surprize, and their division suffered severely. The gallant band of Emigrants, under the Prince of Condè, distinguished themselves greatly upon this occasion; and the Duke D'Enghien signalized his skill and courage in a particular manner. The

Austrians lost four thousand men, and twelve pieces of cannon, in the conflict.

On the fifth of October, Moreau continued his retreat, which was greatly facilitated by his late victory at Biberach, which prevented Latour from renewing his pursuit till the seventh. The first division of the French forced the passage of the valley of Hell, which was but feebly defended by a small and inadequate force under Colonel D'Apre, and took possession of Friburgh, on the thirteenth of October. The succeeding divisions followed, on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth, while the baggage and ammunition-waggons passed through the forest towns, under the protection of the right wing.

Latour now gave up the pursuit, which he had continued for a month, without skill, and, consequently, without success. Indeed, his conduct supplied as strong a contrast to that of the Archduke, in his pursuit of Jourdan, as that of Jourdan did to the conduct of Moreau. He now marched towards the valley of Kintzig, to form a junction with the Archduke, who was further strengthened by the union of the corps under Nauendorf and Petrarch.

Moreau, elated, as he well might be, with the success of his retreat, resolved to maintain himself in the Brisgau; and flattered himself with the hope of finishing the campaign by a splendid victory over the Archduke Charles. At this time the Austrian army formed a line, with its right against the Rhine, extending along the front of the river Eltz, crossing the mountains of Simonswald, and terminating, on the left, at the entrance of the vallies of St. Peter and St. Meger, where the Prince of Condè and General Frolich were posted. The right of the French occupied the mouths of these vallies, from which their line passed by Simonswald, Valdkirch, Emendingen, in front of the Eltz and of Kintzingen, near the Rhine, to which their left extended.

After some smart skirmishes on the two preceding days, the Austrians, on the morning of the 19th of October, attacked the French line, and, after a vigorous resistance, drove the enemy from every post.

Moreau took up a new position behind the Eltz; but he did not think it prudent to wait a second attack, which the Archduke, with his usual promptitude and vigour, was preparing to make. He was pursued by the Austrians, defeated in another action, and finally passed the Rhine at Huningen, on the 26th of October.—That Moreau conducted his retreat with great skill cannot be denied; but that he committed many errors, and was guilty of many acts of imprudence, is equally certain. By unnecessary delay he exposed himself to bad situations, and to imminent danger; and, but for the more inexcusable misconduct of the Austrian Generals, and especially of Latour, his whole army must have been destroyed. It has been truly observed, that to the injudicious distribution of Latour's force, Moreau was principally indebted for his success; for, by forming an immense circle round the retreating French, the latter were enabled to direct their whole force against any point of it which it was necessary to force. Whereas, if the Austrian force had been concentrated, it might have watched an opportunity, and have acted with irresistible strength, and decisive effect, on any part of the French columns. The faults, indeed, were great on both sides; but on that of the Austrians they were not balanced by any display of skill, or by any exertion of vigour;—whereas the French General, by an able improvement of many of the opportunities with which the misconduct of his opponents supplied him, and by the final accomplishment of his main object, made ample amends for his errors.

The Archduke Charles determined to give no repose to his army until he had recovered the important fort of Kehl from the hands of the French, who had greatly strengthened its fortifications, and given it the additional protection of a strongly entrenched camp. The Austrians opened the siege of the place about the middle of November;—it continued seven weeks, during which time, it is difficult to say whether the besiegers or the besieged displayed the greatest courage and perseverance. It was not till the 10th of January that the fort surrendered, after the loss of many thousand men on either side. The head of the bridge of Huningen, which was a post of great strength, had been contested with almost equal obstinacy, and was carried by the Austrians, on the second of the following month, when the whole

of the French re-crossed the Rhine. After the defeat of Jourdan, the remnants of his scattered army were entrusted to Bournonville, the late Secretary at War, one of those conventional agents whom Dumouriez had arrested in the Netherlands, and who had been recently exchanged for the Princess Royal of France: this man, whose ignorance and incapacity could only be exceeded by his vanity and presumption, filled his reports to the Directory with the most false and exaggerated accounts of the prowess of his troops, magnifying every skirmish into a battle, and every action into a victory. After various conflicts, alternately advantageous and prejudicial to either party, and productive of no decisive effect, hostilities ceased, as by mutual consent, and both armies went into winter quarters, on the 10th of November.

Thus, at the end of this campaign, in which so much money had been expended, and so much blood had been shed, the French and Austrians remained in nearly the same relative situation which they occupied at its commencement. The French had two objects in view; first, to conquer the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria; and, secondly, to maintain their armies at the expence of the neighbouring powers. They failed completely in the former; but they succeeded in the latter; for, during four months, the armies had subsisted entirely on the fruits of their plunder, and they had gained a farther advantage, by inspiring several of the petty Princes of Germany with such a dread of their power, as induced them to resign all hopes of successful resistance, and, by a base violation of their duty as members of the Germanic body, to desert the head of the Empire, and purchase a precarious and disgraceful peace from the French. The most accurate estimate of the loss on either side during the campaign in Germany, makes that of the Austrians amount to between twenty-five and thirty thousand men; and that of the French to forty thousand*. The events of the campaign served to raise the military character of the Archduke Charles very high indeed in the estimation of his countrymen. He had displayed most of the qualifications requisite to form a great commander;—a mind fertile in resources of

* The History of the Campaign of 1796, p. 185.

every kind; neither so elated by victory as to neglect the means for improving its advantages; nor so depressed by defeat as to omit the adoption of any measures which might counteract its effects;—a quick perception; a sound judgment; great promptitude, activity, energy, and decision.*

The same motives which had induced the French to invade Germany, influenced their irruption into Italy—plunder, and the hope of dictating peace to the Emperor. The wretched state to which their army, in the latter country, had been reduced by the sword, by want of provisions, and every means of subsistence, led the Austrians to believe, that the presence of a large force there would be unnecessary. At the beginning of the year, however, the Directory had assembled about forty thousand of their best troops, in the southern provinces of the Republic, under pretence of checking the disposition to Royalty, which had manifested itself in that quarter. Buonaparte, who had demanded, of his patron, Barras, some reward for the zeal which he had displayed in the murder of his fellow citizens at Paris, in the month of October, received the command of this army, on condition that he would accept, at the same time, the hand of Madame Beauharnois, who, since the death of her husband, had lived with Barras, as his mistress. The greedy Corsican, who never suffered any principle of delicacy to interfere, for a moment, with the promotion of his interest, gratefully accepted an offer which a man of honour would have rejected with indignation. He accordingly, married the lady, and took the command of the army of Italy, which entered the territory of the Genoese Republic, in the month of April. Soon after the campaign opened, Buonaparte found himself at the head of more than 60,000 men, 45,000 of which were under his im-

* The following fact will convey some idea of the *decisiveness* which forms a leading trait in the character of the Archduke.—In the affair of the twenty-fourth of October, he ordered the Major of a regiment of light horse to attack a redoubt which the French had erected in a vineyard. The officer obeyed; but the ground being very disadvantageous for cavalry, he was repulsed. The Archduke, coming up at the moment of his retreat, called out to him,—"Sir, you misunderstood me; my orders were to *take* the redoubt!" The officer felt the force of the reproach, renewed the attack with all the vigour of despair, and carried the redoubt, though at the expence of his life.—*History of the Campaign of* 1796.

mediate command;—the remainder being posted along the *Col di Tende*, and the *Riviere di Genoa*.—Kellerman, who headed the army of the Alps, as it was called, had 25,000 men under him; so that the whole force of the French, in the spring of this year, amounted to 85,000 men. The Austrian army, under General Beaulieu, did not amount to 35,000 effective men, including a Neapolitan corps of about 7,000. The Piedmontese army, commanded by the Austrian General Colli, amounted to 20,000, and was employed in defending the different approaches to Piedmont; and the Duc D'Aosta was stationed in Savoy, with 15,000 men, to watch Kellerman. Hence it will appear that, to the French force of 85,000 men, the Allies had only 70,000 men to oppose. At the very opening of the campaign the Austrian General committed a gross fault, which had a material influence on the result of all the subsequent operations. Deceived by a false report, spread purposely by the French, he conceived that they meant to attack Genoa, and he, therefore, sent a strong detachment to cover that city, and, wishing to keep up a communication with the Piedmontese, extended his line so as to spread over a front of sixty miles;—thus affording an opportunity to the enemy to attack him, on any point they chose, with a greatly superior force. On the eleventh of April, General Beaulieu made a successful attack on the right of the French, and drove them from all their posts, except the strong redoubt of Montenotte.—This he assailed on the following morning; but the French, having made a movement in the night, had turned both his flanks, and compelled him to give over all thoughts of attack, and to think only of defending himself. After a long resistance against a superior force, the Austrians were obliged to retreat, having lost, according to the French accounts, 3,500 men, of whom 1,000 were said to be killed, and the rest prisoners.

After this defeat, the Austrians fell back, with a view to form a junction with the Piedmontese; but they were speedily overtaken by the French, and reduced to the necessity of risking a general action, at Montelesino, on the fourteenth. The conflict was sustained for several hours, with great resolution, and victory was long doubtful; but the Austrians were at length overpowered by numbers, and completely

routed. Buonaparté's account made their loss, on this occasion, amount to 3,500 killed, and 8,000 prisoners. The French themselves lost two Generals, Panel and Quentin, and a third, Joubert, was severely wounded. If the French account were to be credited, the allies had lost, in five days, 15,000 men, of whom more than two thirds were Austrians; so that the Austrian army itself was reduced to 20,000. —Yet, notwithstanding this reduction, General Beaulieu, the very night after the last action, attacked the French army, put it to the rout, and drove it from the position of Dego, which it had taken from him in the morning. In this affair the French, who, as usual, converted their defeat into a victory, lost three more of their Generals, Causse, Dupuis, and Rondeau.—They stated the loss of the Austrians to be 600 killed, and 1,400 prisoners.

Buonaparté, having succeeded in his attempt to separate the Austrians from the Piedmontese, left a part of his army to watch the movements of the latter, and marched with his main force against the former. After several fruitless attempts to resist the victorious progress of the French, and seeing no prospect of being relieved by the Austrians, the King of Sardinia soon concluded an armistice, and afterwards a peace, with the French Republic, which secured to the latter the sovereignty of Savoy and Nice, and put her in possession of most of the strong places in Piedmont, with a free passage for her troops through the Sardinian territory. The French had now a full opening into the Milanese, and almost a certainty of reducing it, as it was defended by an army not half so numerous as their own. Beaulieu, of course, was reduced to the necessity of acting on the defensive and of prolonging his resistance, with a view to afford time to the Court of Vienna to send him reinforcements. For this purpose, he crossed the Po at Valenza, and took a position behind it, between the rivers Tesino and Terdoppio, in order to protect the Milanese. — But Buonaparté proceeded, by forced marches, towards Placentia, and crossed the Po, on the 8th of May, with little opposition;—the troops which Beaulieu had sent to oppose the passage having arrived too late to prevent it. The detachments which had advanced for this purpose proceeded to Lodi, to which place Beaulieu had moved in the night.

On the 10th of May, the Austrian rear-guard, which was posted in front of the town of Lodi, and of the river Adda, was cannonaded by the advanced guard of the French, who compelled them to evacuate the town, and to retire to the opposite side of the river. A great fault was committed here in not breaking down the bridge, after they had crossed it;—but the omission, however, did not arise from negligence, but from design;—for, Major Malcamp, Beaulieu's son-in-law, who commanded the rear-guard of the Austrians, had, as he thought, guarded the bridge so effectually that the enemy would not dare to cross it.—In fact, he had placed several pieces of cannon at the end of the bridge, which served to enfilade it, while batteries, placed on the right and left, commanded it by a cross fire. Convinced of its perfect security, he would not allow it to be destroyed. He was destined, however, to perceive, and to deplore, his error, when too late to correct it.

As soon as the whole of the French army had reached the banks of the Adda, Buonaparté assembled his general officers, and imparted to them his resolution to storm the bridge.—The plan was unanimously condemned, as rash, destructive, and useless.—Vain and inflexible, the desperate Corsican treated their remonstrances with disdain; and, having called together a council of *grenadiers*, he communicated his determination to them, and, by successful appeals to their vanity, strongly aided by other persuasives, extorted their consent to his project.* Four thousand grenadiers and carabineers, formed into a solid column, approached the bridge; but no sooner had they set foot on it than a dreadful discharge of grape-shot, from the Austrian guns, compelled them to fall back. Again and again they returned to the charge, fortified by liquor, and insensible to danger, but again and again were

* At the end of his speech to the grenadiers, the latter said,—"Give us some brandy, and we will see what is to be done." This potent mean of infusing courage into the republican troops, the good effects of which had been so often experienced, was administered in abundance, and proved much more efficacious than the Corsican's eloquence. This fact is related on the authority of an officer of the Austrian staff, who received it from a French officer who was present at the battle of Lodi, and was taken prisoner some time after. *History of the Campaign of* 1796, *p.* 370.

they mowed down by a tremendous fire, from the short distance of a few paces. Any commander, who had the smallest regard for the lives of his men, particularly when he could have secured his object, with little or no loss, by different means, would have now abandoned this destructive conflict. But Buonaparté had no such regard;—he considered his soldiers as mere automata, to move at his command;—or rather as instruments, corporeally active indeed, but mentally passive, for the attainment of his objects, whatever they might be, and whose lives were not worthy the thought of a moment. He supplied the enormous deficiency, in the assailing column, occasioned by the destructive fire of the enemy, with fresh troops, and ordered another attack to be made. Six Generals placed themselves at the head of their men, whom they inflamed by their language, and animated by their example. Availing themselves of a propitious moment, when the thick smoke, from the Austrian guns, enveloped the bridge, as it were in darkness, and effectually obscured them from the sight of their enemy, they rushed impetuously forwards, reached the opposite extremity of the bridge, before they were perceived by the Austrians, and, consequently, escaped their fire. They then seized the guns, while the remainder of the army passed over the bridge without opposition; and the Austrians, unable to contend against such superior numbers, abandoned their ground, and began their retreat. They were protected by the Neapolitan cavalry, who greatly distinguished themselves on this occasion.

The success of this action by no means justified the attempt;—nor is the smallest credit due to Buonaparté, either for his skill or his judgment, in directing and in arranging the plan of the attack.—He acted in direct contradiction to the general opinion of his officers; and took a severe responsibility upon himself. Nor was the weight of this at all diminished, nor ought the effects of it to have been at all averted by the final accomplishment of his plan. It is the duty of a commander so to execute his projects, as to expose his troops to the least possible danger; and to incur the least possible loss. And if two modes of attaining an object present themselves, by one of which five hundred men only are likely to be sacrificed, and by the other of

which five thousand form the probable amount of the loss to be sustained, the commander, who prefers the latter to the former, is as much guilty of the murder of four thousand fi e hundred men as if he signed the order for their execution. Now, it is certain that Buonaparté might have passed the Adda with as little loss as he incurred in the passage of the Po;—there was no more necessity for his crossing the one river at Lodi, than there was for his crossing the other at Valenza. At Valenza, he found the Austrians prepared to receive him, and he wisely desisted from his purpose, and gained his point, at a different place, with little or no opposition; and, consequently, with little loss. At the bridge of Lodi, the Austrians were more advantageously posted; and the passage could not be effected without a certainty of immense loss. There was every motive for adopting a similar line of conduct; and the same facility subsisted for crossing the river at a different part. Yet did he pursue a totally different course; and, utterly regardless of the dreadful sacrifice which he was about to make, without the smallest necessity to call for, or to justify, it, he obstinately persisted in his destructive project.* He shewed himself, therefore, woefully deficient in the first qualities of an able commander; and had nothing, indeed, to boast of, but obstinacy and decision. The French officers and troops certainly displayed, on this occasion, the most intrepid courage; but the praise so profusely bestowed on their commander, for his personal prowess, does not appear to have truth for its basis. It is not probable, that Buonaparté should place himself at the head of the first column which attacked the bridge; he would ill indeed have discharged

* An attempt has been made to justify his conduct, in this instance, by the ridiculous pretext, that, "unless he succeeded in effecting a passage over the bridge, his failure would be construed into a defeat, and the reputation of the French arms would suffer in the opinion of the public." The same reason, if there were any validity in it, would have rendered it necessary for him to force the passage of the Po at Valenza; and the same consequences would have resulted from his prudential forbearance on that occasion. But this is a mere pretext, equally vain and absurd. The fact appears to have been, that, incensed at the vigilance and activity of the Austrians, (who, by their judicious movements, at this period, seem to have been desirous of making amends for their past imprudence, and met him at every point that was defensible,) he became irritated; and, impatient of restraint, and obeying the natural impetuosity of his temper, he resolved, at all hazards, to effect his purpose without further delay.

his duty as Commander in Chief, if he had exposed himself to unnecessary danger, in such a situation. Nor is it more probable, that he was one of the six Generals who led the final attack. There is reason to think that he did not pass the bridge till the Austrian guns had been secured; and he had not much opportunity afterwards for the display of his courage. In his letter to the Directory, Buonaparté stated the loss of the Austrians to amount to 2,500 men, of which 1,000 were prisoners; while, with the most profligate contempt of truth, he reduced his own to *four hundred.* Indeed, not the smallest reliance can be placed on any one of this man's reports; but never did he exhibit a more glaring proof of their falsehood, than at present.—By no one but himself, was his loss, at the bridge of Lodi, ever estimated at less than four thousand; and it has even been carried, by some, who had opportunity for personal observation, as high as seven thousand.*—Indeed, from the very nature of the action, in which a close-wedged column of troops was long exposed to a most heavy fire of artillery, posted within a few paces of them, it was impossible not to sustain an immense loss of men.—This loss, however, was soon supplied, by reinforcements from Kellerman's army, who, since the peace with Sardinia, had no enemy to contend with in the Alps.

The French entered Milan on the eleventh of May, it having been previously evacuated (the citadel excepted) by the Austrians; and, on the following day, Buonaparté made his triumphal entry into the capital of the Milanese, on which he conferred the *blessings* of French liberty, on the payment of the stipulated *price.* The same *blessings* were bestowed on the Duke of Modena, on similar conditions, accompanied by the sacrifice of twenty valuable paintings! On his first entrance into Lombardy, Buonaparté had issued a proclamation, in which he held out the following lure to the inhabitants.—" Nations of Italy!—The French army is come to break your chains,—the French

* A general officer, who had served in Italy, assured me, that the French lost seven thousand men at the bridge of Lodi. This gentleman, who noticed the personal prowess which Buonaparté was said to have displayed on the occasion, laughed at the account; and told me, that he had seen him frequently in action, and that no man ever exhibited less courage, or took greater care of his own person.

are the friends of the people in every country;—your religion, your property, your customs, shall be respected." At Milan, where he stayed some time, to gratify his vanity, and to consolidate his plans of conquest, he issued a second proclamation, on the twentieth of May, in which he again observed:—" Respect for property and personal security, and respect for the national religion; these are the sentiments of the government of the French Republic, and of the army of Italy. The French, victorious, consider the nations of Lombardy as their brothers." It has been already observed, that these blessings were too great to be conferred without an adequate price; and, therefore, in this very proclamation, he imposed on the Milanese a *provisional* contribution of eight hundred thousand pounds, and upwards; and successive exactions were afterwards levied on that single state, to the amount, in the whole, of near six millions sterling.—Such was the comment on Buonaparté's text,—" Respect for property!"—His " respect for the national religion," was manifested in a similar way. The churches were consigned to indiscriminate plunder. Every religious and charitable fund, every public treasure, was confiscated. The country was rendered the scene of every species of rapine and disorder. The priests, the established form of worship, all the objects of religious reverence, were openly insulted, and the modesty of the women violated, by the licentious hordes of Republican France. At Pavia, in particular, the tomb of St. Augustine, which the inhabitants were accustomed to view with peculiar veneration, was mutilated and defaced. This last provocation having roused the resentment of the people, they flew to arms, surrounded the French garrison, and took them prisoners; but carefully abstained from inflicting the smallest violence on a single soldier. In revenge for this conduct, Buonaparté, then on his march to the Mincio, suddenly returned, collected his troops, and carried the extremity of military execution over the country. One act of this ferocious Corsican, the page of history must transmit to future times, as alone sufficient to stamp his character with indelible infamy.—At the village of Binasco, a French soldier entered the cottage of a peasant, and offered violence to the person of his daughter, a girl of fourteen, in his presence.—The enraged parent, yielding to a virtuous impulse of resentment, instantly levelled the

licentious miscreant to the earth. To punish this act, which every man of virtue and of honour must commend, Buonaparté ordered the village to be burned, and its inhabitants, to the number of eight hundred, without distinction of sex or age, to be put to the sword.—And, to the disgrace of France be it told, his orders were strictly obeyed. He then marched to Pavia, took it by storm, consigned it to general plunder, and published a proclamation, on the twenty-sixth of May, ordering his troops to shoot all those who had not laid down their arms, and taken *an oath of obedience;* and to burn every village in which the alarm-bell should be sounded, and to put its inhabitants to death.*

With equal good faith Buonaparté observed his treaty with the Duke of Modena. In consideration of half a million of money, secured to him by that treaty, the Corsican solemnly stipulated for the perfect neutrality of his Duchy.—Yet, soon after, he caused the Duke to be arrested, and extorted from him two hundred thousand sequins.—He was then allowed to sign another treaty, called a *Convention de Suretè*, or Pact of Safety, which was only the prelude to further exactions.

General Beaulieu's efforts were now confined to the sole object of covering the important fortress of Mantua, and maintaining the communication with Germany. For this purpose he took an advantageous position on the Mincio, where he was attacked by the French on the 30th of May.—In imminent danger of having his retreat cut off, he threw a garrison of 12,000 men into Mantua, and crossed the Adige with the remainder of his army; defeated a body of French sent in

* The language applied to these patriotic efforts of the Italians, to oppose the tyranny of their enemies, and to rid their country of the most sanguinary ruffians that ever disgraced the earth, is most unwarrantable and reprehensible. They have been generally termed *Insurrections*, (See the Campaigns of 1796, Dr. Bisset's Reign of George the Third, Ottridge's Annual Register, and all the French writers, without exception,) which signify only *seditious* risings, and *rebellious* commotions, and necessarily apply to the illegal resistance of regular and legitimate authority; whereas the opposition of the Italians, to the French, was the lawful and proper resistance of an enemy in support of such authority;—an act, in short, of self-defence, and self-preservation, justified alike by the laws of war, and the laws of nations. The use of such loose and inappropriate expressions cannot be too strongly deprecated.

qursuit of him; traversed the states of Venice, and retired into the narrow passes of the Tyrol, with 14,000 men, being all that was left of his whole force.

Buonaparté, now left without an army to oppose, extended his conquests at pleasure. The King of Naples, alarmed at the rapidity of his course, solicited and obtained a treaty of peace early in June; and the Pope purchased a precarious neutrality, with a contribution of 900,000 pounds, 100 paintings, 200 valuable manuscripts; the cession of Ferrara, Bologna, the fort of Urbino, and the citadel of Ancona; and the liberation of all his seditious and traitorous subjects. This last disgraceful stipulation had been imposed on the King of Sardinia; and formed a regular article in the new diplomatic code of Republican France, who found it her interest to compel degraded Sovereigns thus to sanction the rebellion of their own subjects.

In violation of the rights of neutrality, and of the treaty which had been concluded between the French Republic and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in the preceding year, and in breach of a positive promise given only a few days before, the French army took forcible possession of Leghorn, on the 27th of June, for the purpose of seizing the British property which was deposited there.

Towards the end of July, Marshal Wurmser took the command of the Austrian army in Italy, which was now increased to 47,000 men. This army he divided into three bodies, with the centre of which he advanced to the Mincio, to attack the front of the French army which was posted between Mantua and Peschiera, having formally invested the first of these places. The right column, under General Quosdanovich, forced the posts of Salo and Brescia, took two thousand prisoners, including three Generals; and pushed forward on the road from Brescia to Mantua, to take the French in the rear, and to support the main attack by the centre column; which had been equally successful in carrying all the French positions on the Adige, where they took 1500 prisoners and ten pieces of cannon.

Buonaparté, now in danger of being surrounded, precipitately raised the siege of Mantua, in the night of the 31st of July, and left all his artillery and ammunition a prey to the garrison, who made a timely sally, and took six hundred of his rear-guard prisoners. He now put in practice his favourite plan of attacking, with his whole force, the separate columns of the enemy;—a plan to which recourse had so often been had, that it was a matter of surprize that the Austrian Generals should have neglected the necessary precautions for preventing its success. His first attempt was directed against the forces under Quosdanovich, which were divided into several parts, at Lonado, Montechiaro, Dezinzano, Brescia, and Salo. All these were successively attacked by the French, on the three first days of August. The most obstinate and severe of all the actions was that which took place, on the third, before Dezinzano, where 4,000 Austrians beat 10,000 French, taking a General and some hundreds of men prisoners.* The French, however, being reinforced with fresh troops, renewed the attack; and the Austrians, overpowered by numbers, and worn out with fatigue, occasioned by a continued march of four days and four nights, were nearly all killed or taken. One half of the corps under Quosdanovich suffered the same fate, while the rest with difficulty escaped to the protecting mountains of the Tyrol. The French also lost a great number of men, and several of their generals.

The French commander now advanced, with 28,000 men, against General Wurmser, who, with 18,000 Austrians, had re-passed the Mincio, and was endeavouring to form a junction with Quosdanovich. On the third of August, Buonaparté came up with his advanced guard, composed of 3,000 men, under General Liptay.—This he immediately attacked with his whole force;—but the Austrian General defended himself with equal skill and resolution, disputing every inch of ground, till Wurmser arrived with the main body.—Before the army, who were fatigued by a long march, made during extreme heat, could be formed, they were furiously assailed by the French, who had

* Campaigns of 1796, p. 266.

every superiority which numbers, and the advantage of ground, could afford. The Austrians, however, posted twelve pieces of cannon so judiciously on an eminence which supported their left, as to enable them to maintain themselves under every disadvantage.

The loss of the Austrians, on this day, amounted to about 2,600 men, though Buonaparté chose to represent it to the Directory as amounting to 7,000.*—The loss of the French was at least as great.

The two armies passed the night within musquet shot of each other; but they were so overcome with fatigue, that neither of them made the least movement on the following day;—the Austrians still preserving the same disadvantageous position which they had occupied on the third. Here they were attacked, on the morning of the fifth, and borne down by the weight of numbers. The whole of them must inevitably have been destroyed or taken if the English Colonel Graham had not fortunately succeeded in persuading Wurmser to order a retreat, after all the solicitations of his own officers had proved fruitless. It had been delayed so long that it could not be effected without considerable loss. Three thousand men were killed, wounded, and taken; and thirty pieces of cannon fell into the hands of the French. Before Wurmser reached the Tyrol, he had lost at least one half of his army;—he had, however, succeeded in strengthening the garrison of Mantua, and in throwing in considerable supplies of provisions and ammunition.

Buonaparté made the whole loss of the Austrians amount, in this short expedition, to seventy pieces of cannon, a still greater number of ammunition-waggons, 6000 men killed or wounded, and 15,000 prisoners. His statement, however, was not so exaggerated as his accounts generally were, though still sufficiently remote from the truth. According to the official report of General Wurmser, to the Aulic Council of War, the Austrians lost 17,000 men, including 391 officers.

* Campaign of 1796, p. 269.

The loss of the French amounted to 10,000, of whom 4000 were made prisoners.*

Having thus overthrown all opposition in Italy, the French commander applied himself to the execution of the grand plan of the Directory, for forming a junction with their armies in Germany, in order to overwhelm Austria with their united force. Buonaparté therefore followed the remains of Wurmser's army, and, on the 4th of September, attacked and forced the Austrian line; and thereby became master of the city, and of the principal part of the Duchy, of Trent. Wurmser, aware of the object of the French, resolved to make an effort, at least, to defeat it, by advancing, with a part of his forces, along the Brenta, and so turn the right flank of the French, by which means he hoped to prevent them from penetrating into the Tyrol, and

* Campaigns of 1796, p. 273.—Buonaparté had two very narrow escapes from falling into the hands of the Austrians.—Some croats had been placed in ambuscade, on the 31st of July, on the road from Brescia to Peschiera, with orders not to fire, and to stop none but officers of rank. In the evening Buonaparté and his *fidus Achates*, Berthier, with their staff, passed along the road, preceded by three hussars. The croats, forgetting their orders, sprang upon the road, and fired at the hussars. They killed two of them, but the third escaped and apprized his Generals of their danger; who, unfortunately, escaped all the shots that were fired at them, and fled with too great speed to be overtaken.—Never, surely, was disobedience of orders productive of more important effects;—for had these two Generals been either killed or taken, it is more than probable, that the face of affairs in Europe would have undergone a complete change;—and many of the calamities which it has since experienced have been prevented. On another occasion, the Austrian hussars, at Goitao, missed Buonaparté, by two minutes only.

The total contempt of truth which marked the public dispatches of Buonaparté was not confined merely to exaggerated statements, but extended even to the fabrication of events which never occurred. Of this a memorable proof was exhibited at the present period. In one of his dispatches to the Directory, he informed them, that, being at Lonado with 1,200 men, at the moment when the town was surrounded with 4,000 Austrians, he ordered them to lay down their arms!! Though there was not a syllable of truth in this story, though it was known, to both armies, to be a scandalous fabrication of his own, yet has it been adopted by historical writers in England, who seem to have combined with those of France for the purpose of poisoning the very source of history, by founding their narratives of pretended *facts* on such false documents, and polluted authorities. The whole account of this campaign, in the Annual Register for 1796, which has been hastily, and without examination, adopted by Dr. Bisset, in his History of the present Reign, has been taken from French reports.

to keep them in Italy. This plan produced the desired effect;—Buonaparté marched in pursuit of Wurmser, overtook his rear-guard, on the 7th of September, at Primolano, on the Brenta, which he defeated, and put to the rout.—Wurmser, however, continued his march, out-manœuvred the French, eluded every attempt to intercept, and to surround, him, beat one of the divisions sent against him, at Cerea, on the 11th, took 800 prisoners, and succeeded in reaching the walls of Mantua, with 10,000 men. The French attacked him, on the 13th, but he again defeated them, killed a great number, and took 1,500 prisoners, with ten pieces of cannon. Buonaparté then drew his troops round Mantua, and all active hostilities ceased for several weeks.

The Cabinet of Vienna, resolved to make another effort o raise the blockade of Mantua, and to rescue Lombardy from the oppressive dominion of the French, collected a corps of 30,000 men, under General Alvinzy, which was put in motion, on the last day of October, and directed its course towards Bassano, on the Brenta; while General Davidovich, with another corps of 20,000, moved along the Adige from Botzen, and bore upon the town of Trent.

At this time the French had 15,000 men on the banks of the Brenta, 10,000 stationed to defend the approach to Trent; 25,000 employed in the blockade, and 10,000 distributed in the different garrisons; making a total of 60,000 men, of whom only 50,000 could be brought into the field; while the Austrians had an equal force, independent of the garrison of Mantua, which consisted of 20,000 men. Thus it appears, that the Austrian Generals had now a fair opportunity of repairing their past disgrace, and of still turning the fortune of the present campaign.

Alvinzy forced the passage of the Brenta, on the 3d of November, and posted himself, with 12,000 men, at Bassano;—he stationed the same number, under Provera, at Fonteniva; and so placed the remainder of his troops, as, at once, to cover his left, and to preserve his communication with Davidovich. On the 5th, Buonaparté left

Vicenza, assembled all his divisions in the vicinity, and made a furious attack on Provera, on the morning of the 6th. This action was maintained with great resolution on both sides, and was extremely destructive. The loss was equal; amounting to 4,000 men; but the French ultimately succeeded in driving the Austrians beyond the Brenta, and in breaking down the bridge at Fonteniva. General Davidovich, during this time, had gained some advantages over the French, in the duchy of Trent, killing two or three thousand of them, and taking as many prisoners.—Alvinzy continued to advance, and, after various skirmishes, brought the French to action, on the 12th of November, defeated them, and compelled them to fall back on Verona. He then moved nearer to Davidovich, and had these two Generals maintained a right understanding with each other, and united their efforts to form a junction of their respective forces, Buonaparté must inevitably have lost all the fruits of the campaign, and, probably, have been driven out of Italy. But it seemed as if the Austrian officers were intent only on defeating the plans which they were employed to accomplish, and acted as if the success of the enemy was the object of their wishes.—On the 13th, in the night, Buonaparté marched with a strong body of troops, along the Adige, with a view to surprize the rear-guard of the Austrians, and to carry off their artillery and baggage. But he found his march impeded by a body of Austrians, who were strongly entrenched at the village of Arcole, which was surrounded with morasses and canals. The troops, employed to defend this post, resisted, during the whole day, the repeated attempts of the French to reduce it. In vain did Buonaparté seek to renew, at Arcole, the scene which he had exhibited at Lodi. In vain did he remind his troops of the glory which they had there acquired. In vain, even, did he lead them several times against the bridge of Arcole; the Austrians remained firm at their post; and destroyed great numbers of the assailants by a dreadful fire of grape and musket-shot, kept up without interruption.—After five Generals had been killed and wounded in this mad attempt, and all hopes of taking the place by storm had been abandoned, a division of his army crossed the Adige at a different point, and, having made an extensive circuit,

came on the village of Arcole in the night, and took it with little opposition.

Alvinzy, instead of persisting in his plan of forming a junction with Davidovich, imprudently directed his course to the Lower Adige, and thus increased the distance between them. On the 15th and 16th two destructive actions were fought, at Arcole, between the contending armies, which ended in the retreat of the Austrians to Bonifacio. Many thousands fell on both sides; and Buonaparté acknowledged, that, in the three actions at Arcole, no less than fifteen of his Generals were killed or wounded. Davidovich, meanwhile, gained repeated advantages over the enemy, on the Upper Adige. He drove them from post to post, as far as Peschiera, and advanced himself to Castelnuovo. By this movement, Davidovich was placed in the rear of Buonaparté, and of the troops which blockaded Mantua, of which city he was within a few leagues; and had nothing to prevent his approach to it. Buonaparté, alarmed at the progress of the Austrian General, left the Lower Adige, collected a large force, and hastened to attack Davidovich. Unable effectually to oppose a force so superior, Davidovich retreated; but not without some fighting, and loss on both sides. Had he and Alvinzy performed their duty, by approaching nearer to each other, which they could easily have done, they would have been sufficiently strong to drive the French before them, and to effect the relief of Mantua. But they seemed rather anxious to avoid, than solicitous to promote, the junction of their forces; and, although they had suffered much less than the French, and were still superior to them in strength, they remained perfectly inactive during the remainder of that year. On the fourth of January, 1797, however, Alvinzy was roused from this state of torpor, by the arrival of Colonel Graham, at his quarters, from Mantua; from whom he received an exact account of the state of the garrison, whose provisions would be totally exhausted by the end of that month. The Austrians had now 50,000 men; 25,000 of whom were with Alvinzy, in the Tyrol; 10,000 were before Padua, with Provera; and the same number at Bassano. The French army, at this period, with all its reinforcements, did not exceed 40,000 men.

It was, at length, resolved to relieve Mantua, and Provera moved forward, on the 7th of January; and, driving the French before him, reached the banks of the Adige. On the 11th, Alvinzy advanced to Montebaldo, and, on the two following days, forced the positions of the French, at Corona, who fell back on Rivoli, their strongest post on the Upper Adige. The plans of the Austrians, hitherto, had been well concerted, and ably combined. Buonaparté, deceived by their movements, was at a loss to which quarter to direct his principal force. But he was indebted to his spies, or rather to the treachery of Austrian officers, for that knowledge, without which he could not possibly have defeated the projects of his opponents. Alvinzy had fixed the morning of the 15th for a general attack on Rivoli; and every measure, which could tend to secure success, had been carefully adopted. But Buonaparté, apprized of his intentions, was enabled to defeat them. He sent reinforcements, in the night, to the threatened point; and, early in the morning, unexpectedly attacked, and recovered, the post of St. Marco, which commanded the valley of the Adige. A most desperate conflict, however, ensued; and, though Buonaparté received reinforcements in the course of the day, he was on the point of sustaining a most signal defeat, when the unaccountable neglect and misconduct of the Austrian commanders, deprived them of all the advantage which they had secured in the early part of the contest.

Provera, on his side, had continued his victorious progress to the gates of Mantua, and, on the 15th, reached the suburb of St. George, which was one of the strongest positions of the blockading army, with about 5000 men; and had concerted a plan, with Wurmser, for a joint attack on the French, on the morning of the 16th. During the night of the 15th, however, Buonaparté and Massena arrived, with a fresh body of troops, and reinforced the threatened posts. By this junction the French force amounted to 17,000 effective men. Every attempt, therefore, of Wurmser and Provera, to carry their entrenchments, proved fruitless; and, after a desperate resistance, Provera, attacked in front and in rear, was reduced to the necessity of capitulating with

his whole corps; and all thoughts of relieving Mantua were abandoned.—That place was surrendered to the French, by capitulation, on the second of February, 1797.

Notwithstanding the many and serious faults committed by the Austrian generals, during this eventful and disastrous campaign, and even that grand error which pervaded all their operations, the division of their force into separate bodies, it is most certain that its issue would have been very different, if Buonaparté had not obtained, by treachery, exact information of all their movements. By means of this he was constantly enabled to direct a superior force against the enemy's weak points; and to provide those positions of his own which it was intended to attack with additional means of resistance. Hence, too, it was that he arrived, both at Rivoli and at Mantua, at the very moment when, but for the reinforcements which accompanied him, his troops must have been defeated, and the Austrians must have gained their point. The combination of circumstances which were necessary to ensure his triumph, amidst so many surrounding difficulties, could not be the effect of either accident or skill. They could only result from the treachery of Austrian officers, who were bribed to betray their country and their Prince. Indeed, Buonaparté was frequently heard to declare, that the Austrian army cost him more money than his own. The reduction of Mantua left the French nothing to oppose in Italy. They overran, indeed, the Papal territory; but after collecting as much plunder as they could, and exacting their own conditions from the Pope, they concluded a peace with his Holiness, who ceded to them Avignon, the Comtat Venaissin, the Duchies of Ferrara and Bologna, and the Legation of Romagna; and consented to pay them a contribution of one million and a half sterling, including about two hundred thousand pounds, which had been advanced after the armistice concluded in the preceding summer.* The usual stipu-

* This armistice had been afterwards broken, in consequence of the refusal of the Pope to comply with the demands of the Directory, who had attempted to impose certain terms which his Holiness considered as an attack on his spiritual authority.

lation, for statues, pictures, and manuscripts, was not omitted in this treaty;—and the civilized French, of the present day, appeared not less anxious to despoil Rome of her treasures, than the barbarous Goths of a former age.

In the brief sketch which has been given of the important operations of this campaign, frequent allusion has been made to the gross unfaithfulness of Buonaparté's reports to the Directory. In order to give the final stamp to his character for falsehood, and to prevent his accounts from becoming the basis of historical narratives, it will not be amiss to exhibit, in one point of view, the result of all his accounts of the losses sustained by the Austrians, and to compare it with an authentic statement of the Austrian force. From these accounts it will be found, that the amount of killed and wounded, in the Austrian army, was near 50,000; and that of the prisoners, upwards of 100,000; making a gross aggregate of 150,000 men, lost by the Austrians between the period at which the campaign opened, and the surrender of Mantua. Now it appears, from an accurate statement, that the whole number of troops sent into Italy, by Austria, from the month of March, 1796, to the first of January, 1797, did not exceed 105,000 men;—namely,—the army with Beaulieu, at the opening of the campaign, 30,000;—troops brought by Wurmser, from Germany, 30,000;—reinforcements sent to D'Alvinzy, in September, October, and November, 25,000;—troops detached from the corps of Frolich, and the armed Tyrolese, 11,000;—fresh reinforcements sent to D'Alvinzy, in December and January, 9,000. Of this number, at least, 10,000 died in the hospitals; and, after all the defeats which the Austrian Generals had sustained, D'Alvinzy had 30,000 men left with him, either in the Tyrol, or on the Brenta.—Hence it will appear, that the whole number which could possibly be taken or destroyed, by the French, was 65,000;—a number sufficiently great, but still far short of that which the positive accounts of Buonaparté had stated it to be;—the difference between his assertions and the truth being no less than 85,000 men. The positive loss of the Austrians, during this destructive campaign, including those who died in the hospitals, was 75,000; that of the French

amounted to 60,000, for Buonaparté had only 60,000 left with him, at the end of January, 1797, whereas the army of the Lower Alps, under his immediate command, before the opening of the campaign, amounted to 30,000;—the troops drawn from Spain, and which joined him in March, April, and May, to 35,000;—Kellerman's army, which joined him after the peace with Sardinia, to 25,000;—subsequent reinforcements from France, at different periods, to 18,000; and the Italian troops, in the French service, to 12,000;—making, in the whole, 120,000 men; whence it follows, that he lost one-half of his army in 1796; and but fifteen thousand men less than the Austrians, who, it should be remembered, lost 18,000 at Mantua alone, the garrison amounting to that number, at the time of its surrender.

The principal cause of the defeat of the Austrians, and the victories of the French, has been assigned; but it is by no means intended to deny, that the troops of the latter, on many occasions, displayed the most intrepid courage; or that their commanders manifested both skill and talents. Berthier, indeed, who held the rank of Colonel in the French army, before the Revolution, and who was at the head of the Staff in Italy, contributed greatly, by his knowledge and abilities, to the success of the French.—He was scarcely ever absent from Buonaparté, who was chiefly indebted to him for the various plans, and arrangements, which were made, after the private information which Austrian treachery had communicated, and which ultimately secured the triumph of his arms. On the other hand, it should be observed, that the Austrian Generals acted under the most precise and peremptory directions from the Aulic council of war, who, sitting at Vienna, chalked out the whole plan of the campaign, and left to the commanders neither power nor discretion; but tied them down to a certain line of conduct, from which they were not at liberty to depart, whatever consequences might ensue, and whatever circumstances might arise.—A system so radically vicious, so hostile to all prudential regulations, and so repugnant to right reason, could scarcely fail to render the best efforts of skill, talents, and knowledge, in the commanders, fruitless and abortive;—and, when combined with treachery in the officers,

and jealousy and misconduct in the generals, might naturally lead to disasters even more serious than those which the Austrian arms sustained in Italy.*

* The facts on which this sketch of the military operations in Germany and Italy is founded, have been taken principally from "The History of the Campaign of 1796;" a work written by a foreign officer, of great respectability, who had many opportunities for personal observation; and who derived his information from the most pure and authentic sources. My knowledge of his character, and of the resources which were opened to him, as well as of the caution exercised in his examination of documents, and selection of facts, and of his strict regard to truth, justify the confidence which I have reposed in his statements, though it has not prevented me from consulting other authorities.

APPENDIX A.

No. I.

AN ACCOUNT of the Number of CRIMINALS executed in the City of LONDON and County of MIDDLESEX, from the Year 1749 to the Year 1806, inclusive; shewing the Proportion in each Seven Years, and distinguishing Years of War from Years of Peace.

Years.	*Executed.*	
1749	44	
50	56	
1	63	Years of Peace.
2	47	
3	41	Average 43 5-7ths.
4	34	
5	21	
	—306	
6	15	
7	26	
8	20	Years of War.
9	6	
1760	10	Average 15 2-7ths.
1	17	
2	15	
	—107	
3	32	
4	31	
5	26	Years of Peace.
6	20	
7	22	Average 26.
8	27	
9	24	
	—182	
1770	49	
1	34	
2	37	Years of Peace.
3	32	
4	32	Average 38.
5	46	
6	38	
	—268	
7	32	
8	33	Years of War.
9	23	
Carried forward	863	

Years.	*Executed.*	
	863	Brought forward.
1780	50	
1	40	Years of War.
2	45	Average 39 3-7ths.
3	53	
	—276	
4	56	
5	97	
6	50	Years of Peace.
7	92	
8	25	Average 54 1-7th.
9	26	
1790	33	
	—379	
1	34	Years of Peace.
2	24	
3	16	
4	7	Years of War.
5	22	
6	22	Average 20 4-7ths.
7	19	
	—144	
8	19	
9	24	Years of War.
1800	19	
1	14	
2	10	Year of Peace.
3	9	
4	8	Years of War.
	—103	
5	10	Average for the last 7 Years 11 6-7ths
6	13	
	— 23	
Total	— 1788	

It appears by this Account, that, during the seven years of peace which preceded the war of 1756, the number of criminals executed within the City of London and County of Middlesex was very considerable, being on an average forty-three a-year.

In the seven years of war which succeeded, they were reduced to about fifteen a-year.

In the seven years which followed the peace of 1763, the numbers again increased, but not to more than twenty-six a-year upon an average.

In the seven years which followed, from the year 1770 to 1776 inclusive, which was likewise a period of peace, the number further increased to thirty-eight a-year.

From the year 1776 to the year 1783, a period during which the country was at war, first with America, and afterwards successively with France, Spain, and Holland, the number, instead of decreasing as had been the case in the former war, still further increased, the average being, during these seven years, about thirty-nine a-year.

From the year 1783 to the year 1790, a period of peace, the average continued increasing to fifty-four a-year, and the years 1785 and 1787 were great beyond all former example.

From 1793, the year in which the existing Police Establishment was first instituted, to the present period, the numbers appear to have progressively diminished; till within the last seven years the average has not been twelve a-year. This period has, with the exception of one intervening year of peace, been a period of war, but, during that year, though the militia was disbanded, some part of the army, and a considerable part of the navy, reduced, the number of capital convicts do not appear to have increased. The example of the American war, and of the year 1802, are sufficient to prove that the increase of capital offences cannot be traced exclusively, or even principally, to the different operation of war or peace, though it is natural to suppose that the first may have some effect in diminishing, and the latter in increasing the number of them.

No. II.

An Account of the Number of Criminals executed in the City of London and County of Middlesex, between the First of January, 1749, and the Thirty-first of December, 1806, shewing the various Crimes of which they were convicted.

Years.	CRIMES.																					
From 1749 to 1771, both years inclusive.	Murder.	Burglary and House-breaking.	Highway Robbery.	Horse-stealing.	Forgery.	Coining.	Returning from Transportation.	Defrauding Creditors.	VARIOUS—Shoplifting, &c.	Piracy.	Rioting.	Cutting and Maiming.	Shooting at Persons.	Sodomy.	Obtaining Property under Charge of an Unnatural Crime.	Forgery of and uttering Bank Notes.	Perpetrating to obtain Prize-money.	Stealing in a Dwelling-house.	Assaulting and Robbing in a Ditto.	Stealing Letters from Gen. Post-office.	Sinking a Ship to defraud Under-wr.	Rape.	Robbery on the River Thames.
Total -	72	118	251	22	71	10	22	3	109	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1772	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	6	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1780	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	25	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	1	15	13	0	4	5	6	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0
4	1	28	16	1	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
5	1	43	31	4	4	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	5
6	7	21	11	2	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
7	1	43	36	3	4	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
8	0	5	5	0	1	3	2	0	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
9	2	11	4	1	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1790	5	6	8	0	3	4	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	3	7	16	3	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	8	3	1	2	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
3	0	8	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
4	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	1	5	5	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
6	5	6	0	2	4	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
7	4	1	5	0	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
8	2	4	0	0	7	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
9	3	4	3	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
1800	2	7	5	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1	3	1	6	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	1	0
3	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
4	0	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
6	1	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total -	139	345	428	41	151	58	41	3	479	10	26	2	6	3	2	6	15	6	3	10	1	4	9

TOTAL EXECUTED IN EACH YEAR.

1749	——	44	Brought over	-	595	Brought over	-	320
50	——	56	1770	——	49	9	——	26
1	——	63	1	——	34	1790	——	33
2	——	47			——			—379
3	——	41			678	1	——	34
4	——	34	1772	——	37	2	——	24
5	——	21	3	——	32	3	——	16
		—306	4	——	32	4	——	7
6	——	13	5	——	46	5	——	22
7	——	26	6	——	38	6	——	22
8	——	20			—268	7	——	19
9	——	6	7	——	32			—144
1760	——	10	8	——	33	8	——	19
1	——	17	9	——	23	9	——	24
2	——	15	1780	——	50	1800	——	19
		—107	1	——	40	1	——	14
3	——	32	2	——	45	2	——	10
4	——	31	3	——	53	3	——	9
5	——	26			—276	4	——	8
6	——	20	4	——	56			—103
7	——	22	5	——	97	5	——	10
8	——	27	6	——	50	6	——	13
9	——	24	7	——	92			— 23
		—182	8	——	25			——
		——			—	Total	- -	1788
Carried over	-	595	Carried over	-	320			

As in the year 1780 the books at Newgate were destroyed, it has not been possible to make up this Account for the early period, in as much detail as could have been wished. It is material to observe likewise, that, from the year 1772 to the year 1783, the crimes of Burglary, Highway Robbery, Horse-stealing, and Forgery, will be found confounded together, under the column of VARIOUS, &c.

The result of this Account appears to be, that the number of Murders from the year 1771 to the present period have remained nearly the same, but that they were considerably more, upon an average, in the twenty years preceding. A most important change, however, has taken place respecting the crimes of Burglary and Highway Robbery. Those offences in their aggravated character, in which it is found necessary to apply capital punishment to them, have nearly disappeared within the county of Middlesex.

No. III.

AN ACCOUNT of the Number of CRIMINAL OFFENDERS, committed to the several Gaols of ENGLAND and WALES for Trial, in the Years 1805 and 1806, together with the Result of the Commitment.

COMMITTED in the Years	1805	1806
Viz. Males	3267	3120
Females	1338	1226
Total	4605	4346
CRIMES, viz.		
Sedition	4	0
Murder	26	24
(Females) of the murder of their infants, or concealing their births	27	36
Manslaughter	56	57
Cutting and maiming persons	21	8
Shooting at persons	14	7
Piracy, and felony on the High Seas	0	3
Sodomy, and other unnatural crimes	15	42
Obtaining property from persons, by threatening to charge them with an unnatural crime	0	2
Rape, (and attempt at)	38	48
Coining	15	10
Uttering bad money	108	84
Forgery	36	34
Ditto of Bank-notes, uttering, and having in their possession	28	15
Personating seamen and others, to obtain prize-money, &c.	0	8
Arson	13	7
Burglary and housebreaking	136	124
Highway robbery	63	52
Horse-stealing	65	53
Sheep-stealing	71	60
Stealing cows, pigs, &c.	38	49
Larceny from the house, person, &c.	3555	3386
Receiving stolen goods	137	110
Fraud, conspiracy, &c.	94	94
Bigamy	23	22
Returning from transportation	15	11
	4605	4346

SENTENCES, &c. in the Years	1805	1806
* Death	350	325
Transportation for 14 years	34	26
Ditto 7 years	561	496
† Imprisonment for the space of 4 years	1	0
† Ditto 3 years	4	4
† Ditto 2 years, and above 1	123	100
† Ditto 1 year, and above 6 months	333	294
† Ditto 6 months, and under	1219	1158
† Whipping, and fine	105	81
Tried and acquitted	1092	1065
Discharged, *(no Bill being found, and for want of prosecution)*	730	766
Discharged to serve in the army and navy	58	31
* EXECUTED	68	57

Viz. for	M.	F.	M.	F.
Murder	5	3	5	0
——— of their infants	0	2	0	0
Cutting and maiming persons	1	0	3	0
Shooting at persons	1	0	2	0
Sodomy	0	0	6	0
Rape	5	0	2	0
Obtaining property from persons, by threatening to charge them with an unnatural crime	0	0	2	0
Forgery	6	0	11	0
Ditto of, and uttering, Bank-notes	6	1	0	0
Personating seamen and others, to obtain prize-money, &c.	0	0	2	0
Coining	3	0	3	1
Arson	2	0	0	0
Burglary and housebreaking	15	0	6	0
Stealing in a dwelling-house	2	0	1	1
Highway robbery	4	0	3	0
Horse-stealing	7	0	4	0
Sheep-stealing	5	0	3	0
Cattle-stealing	0	0	1	0
Returning from transportation	0	0	1	0

† And severally to be whipped, pilloried, kept to hard labour, fined, and given security, &c.

No. III.—*Continued.*

NUMBER COMMITTED IN EACH COUNTY.

In the Years	1805.		1806.	
	Male.	Female	Male.	Female
Anglesea	1	0	3	0
Bedford	17	3	15	5
Berks	50	12	29	13
Brecon	3	4	10	2
Bucks	29	4	36	4
Cambridge	36	4	19	7
Cardigan	2	0	5	2
Caermarthen	5	3	10	6
Caernarvon	4	2	4	0
Chester	56	24	87	14
Cornwall	35	10	35	8
Cumberland	9	0	9	3
Denbeigh	2	0	4	0
Derby	34	5	32	5
Devon	69	27	105	27
Dorset	28	10	34	10
Durham	22	5	19	10
Essex	127	17	101	17
Flint	3	1	1	2
Glamorgan	10	5	10	2
Gloucester	81	23	66	18
Bristol	27	10	38	14
Hants	105	42	106	41
Hereford	29	2	32	9
Herts	36	7	46	6
Huntingdon	13	2	9	2
Kent	169	41	151	33
Carried over	1022	268	1017	260

In the Years	1805.		1806.	
	Male.	Female	Male.	Female
Brought over	1022	268	1017	260
Lancaster	206	165	227	124
Leicester	33	14	24	8
Lincoln	44	14	49	15
Merioneth	0	0	1	0
Middlesex	732	485	700	432
Monmouth	14	6	12	5
Montgomery	10	5	10	5
Norfolk	114	49	88	31
Northampton	35	7	42	16
Northumberland	18	20	21	18
Nottingham	60	14	51	19
Oxford	34	4	26	8
Pembroke	7	5	2	3
Radnor	3	3	0	1
Rutland	4	0	3	5
Salop	59	20	44	22
Somerset	79	27	81	24
Stafford	67	24	72	21
Suffolk	96	13	99	19
Surrey	147	52	134	57
Sussex	93	12	50	12
Warwick	120	40	89	41
Westmoreland	4	2	5	1
Wilts	61	14	63	9
Worcester	44	7	51	16
York	181	64	159	54
Total	3267	1338	3120	1226

The result of this Account appears to be, that the number of Offenders in the County of Middlesex, are more than one-fourth of the whole; and that the number in proportion to the population in the counties most contiguous to London, are nearly double the number in the same population in the more remote counties.

No. IV.

An ACCOUNT of the POPULATION of each COUNTY, according to the Population Returns; the number of OFFENDERS committed within the same respectively, in the Year 1805; together with the Amount of PAUPERS in each County, and the number of them in each Hundred of the Population, arranged according to the Circuits of the Judges.

NORTHERN CIRCUIT.

COUNTIES.	Population.	Offenders.	Paupers.	Number of Paupers in each Hundred of Population.
Yorkshire	858,892	245	77,661	9
Durham	160,361	27	15,307	10
Northumberland	157,101	38	14,304	9
Cumberland	117,230	18	8,443	7
Westmoreland	41,617	6	4,615	11
Lancaster	672,731	371	46,200	7
	2,007,932	705	166,530	being an Average of 8 Paupers in each Hundred in the Northern Circuit.

MIDLAND CIRCUIT.

Northampton	131,757	42	20,534	16
Rutland	16,356	4	1,338	8
Lincoln	208,557	58	18,845	9
Nottinghamshire	140,350	74	9,806	7
Derbyshire	161,142	39	13,167	8
Leicestershire	130,081	47	19,154	15
Warwickshire	208,190	160	30,200	15
	996,433	424	113,044	Average 11.

NORFOLK CIRCUIT.

Bucks	107,444	33	19,650	18
Bedfordshire	63,393	20	7,276	11
Huntingdonshire	37,568	15	4,746	13
Cambridgeshire	89,346	40	11,294	13
Suffolk	210,431	109	36,110	17
Norfolk	273,371	163	42,707	16
	781,553	380	121,783	Average 15.

OXFORD CIRCUIT.

Berks	109,215	62	22,088	21
Oxfordshire	109,620	38	21,025	20
Worcestershire	139,330	51	18,896	13
Staffordshire	239,153	91	22,510	9
Shropshire	167,039	79	17,306	10
Herefordshire	89,190	31	11,779	13
Gloucestershire	250,809	141	36,904	15
Monmouth	45,582	20	4,479	10
	1,150,538	513	154,987	Average 13.

No. IV.—*Continued.*

WESTERN CIRCUIT.

COUNTIES.	Population.	Offenders.	Paupers.	Number of Paupers in each Hundred of Population.
Hampshire	219,656	147	32,581	15
Wiltshire	185,107	75	42,128	23
Dorsetshire	115,319	38	15,783	14
Devonshire	343,001	96	43,674	13
Cornwall	188,269	45	12,853	7
Somersetshire	273,750	106	33,979	12
	1,325,102	507	180,998	Average 14.

HOME CIRCUIT.

Essex	226,437	144	38,337	17
Hertfordshire	97,577	43	13,349	14
Sussex	159,311	105	37,076	23
Kent	307,624	210	41,632	13
Surrey	269,043	199	36,138	13
	1,059,992	701	166,532	Average 15¾.
Chester	191,751	80	22,152	11½
North Wales	252,785	28	28,131	9
South Wales	288,761	50	28,384	
Middlesex	818,129	1,217	63,173	7½
TOTAL	8,877,976	4,605	879,182	

The observation which naturally occurs on an examination of this Account, is, the very great advantage which the Northern Counties appear to possess, both with respect to the small number of Offenders and Paupers, when compared with the rest of England. This observation applies, not only to the Counties within the Northern Circuit, but likewise, as far as relates to Paupers generally, to all the more Northern Counties. The Counties of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, and Rutland, and the most Northern Counties in the Midland Circuit, and those of Staffordshire and Shropshire, the most Northern in the Oxford Circuit, appear to be, in this respect, in the same comparatively favourable situation as the Counties within the Northern Circuit, when compared with the other more Southern Counties of England, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Cornwall, alone excepted.

APPENDIX B.

Proclamation for the preventing of Tumultuous Meetings and Seditious Writings, May 21.

BY THE KING. A PROCLAMATION.

GEORGE R.

WHEREAS divers wicked and seditious writings have been printed, published, and industriously dispersed, tending to excite tumult and disorder, by endeavouring to raise groundless jealousies and discontents in the minds of our faithful and loving subjects, respecting the laws and happy constitution of government, civil and religious, established in this kingdom; and endeavouring to vilify, and bring into contempt, the wise and wholesome provisions made at the time of the glorious Revolution, and since strengthened and confirmed by subsequent laws, for the preservation and security of the rights and liberties of our faithful and loving subjects: and whereas divers writings have also been printed, published, and industriously dispersed, recommending the said wicked and seditious publications to the attention of all our faithful and loving subjects: and whereas we have also reason to believe, that correspondences have been entered into with sundry persons in foreign parts, with a view to forward the criminal and wicked purposes above-mentioned: and whereas the wealth, happiness, and prosperity of this kingdom do, under Divine Providence, chiefly depend upon a due submission to the laws, a just confidence in the integrity and wisdom of Parliament, and a continuance of that zealous attachment to the government and constitution of the kingdom, which has ever prevailed in the minds of the people thereof: and whereas there is nothing which we so earnestly desire, as to secure the public peace and prosperity, and to preserve to all our loving subjects the full enjoyment of their rights and liberties, both religious and civil. We, therefore, being resolved, as far as in us lies, to repress the wicked and seditious practices aforesaid, and to deter all persons from following so pernicious an example, have thought fit, by the advice of our Privy Council, to issue this our royal proclamation, solemnly warning all our loving subjects, as they tender their own happiness, and that of their posterity, to guard against all such attempts, which aim at the subversion of all regular government within this kingdom, and which are inconsistent with the peace and order of society; and earnestly exhorting them at all times, and to the utmost of their power, to avoid and discourage all proceedings tending to produce riots and tumults. And we do strictly charge and command all our magistrates, in and throughout our kingdom of Great Britain, that they do make diligent enquiry, in order to discover the authors and printers of such wicked and seditious writings as aforesaid, and all others who shall disperse the same: and we do further charge and command all our sheriffs, justices of the peace, chief magistrates in our cities, boroughs, and corporations, and all other our officers and

magistrates throughout our kingdom of Great Britain, that they do, in their several and respective stations, take the most immediate and effectual care to suppress and prevent all riots, tumults, and other disorders, which may be attempted to be raised or made by any person or persons, which, on whatever pretext they may be grounded, are not only contrary to the law, but dangerous to the most important interests of this kingdom: and we do further require and command all and every our magistrates aforesaid, that they do, from time to time, transmit to one of our principal Secretaries of State, due and full information of such persons as shall be found offending as aforesaid, or, in any degree, aiding or abetting therein; it being our determination, for the preservation of the peace and happiness of our faithful and loving subjects, to carry the laws vigorously into execution against such offenders as aforesaid.

Given at our court at the Queen's House, the 21st day of May, 1792, in the thirty-second year of our reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

APPENDIX C.

Translation of a Letter from General Dumouriez to Lord Auckland, the British Ambassador at the Hague.

MY LORD, *Paris, January 23d*, 1793.

THE French Minister at the Hague, and my sincere friend, M. de Maulde, has informed me, that, in several conferences with M. Van Spieghel, and himself, you testified your esteem and particular consideration for me, which I shall ever take care to deserve by my moral conduct. The Grand Pensionary expressed the same sentiments.

As I am about to visit the quarters of my army, I shall be in the neighbourhood of Holland for some days. Would it not be possible, from a conference on the frontiers, either between you and me, or in the presence of M. Van Spieghel, to produce results useful to England, to the United Provinces, to France, to Humanity, and, perhaps, to all Europe.

I submit this proposal to your prudence, and to your love of peace, which every man of integrity ought to find at the bottom of his heart. On the 30th of this month, I shall be at Antwerp, where I will wait two days for your answer.

I beg you to be persuaded that I am, with the same sentiments for you with which you honour me,

My Lord,

Your Servant,

And the Friend of the English Nation,

DUMOURIEZ.

To his Excellence, My Lord Auckland,
The English Ambassador at the Hague.

APPENDIX D.

"THAT an address be presented to his Majesty, most humbly to offer to his royal consideration, that judgment which his faithful Commons have formed, and now deem it their duty to declare, concerning the conduct of his ministers in the commencement and during the progress, of the present unfortunate war. As long as it was possible for us to doubt from what source the national distresses had arisen, we have, in times of difficulty and peril, thought ourselves bound to strengthen his Majesty's government for the protection of his subjects, by our confidence and support. But our duties, as his Majesty's counsellors, and as the representatives of his people, will no longer permit us to dissemble our deliberate and determined opinion, that the distress, difficulty, and peril, to which this country is now subjected, have arisen from the misconduct of the King's ministers, and are likely to subsist and increase, as long as the same principles which have hitherto guided these ministers, shall continue to prevail in the councils of Great Britain.

"It is painful for us to remind his Majesty of the situation of his dominions at the beginning of the war, and of the high degree of prosperity to which the skill and industry of his subjects had, under the safeguard of a free constitution, raised the British empire, since it can only fill his mind with the melancholy recollection of prosperity abused, and of opportunities of securing permanent advantages wantonly rejected. Nor shall we presume to wound his Majesty's benevolence by dwelling on the fortunate circumstances which might have arisen from the mediation of Great Britain between the powers then at war, which might have ensured the permanence of our prosperity, while it preserved all Europe from the calamities which it has since endured. A mediation which this kingdom was so well fitted to carry on with vigour and dignity, by its power, its character, and the nature of its government, happily removed at an equal distance from the contending extremes of licentiousness and tyranny.

"From this neutral and impartial system of policy his Majesty's ministers were induced to depart by certain measures of the French government, of which they complained as injurious and hostile to this country. With what justice those complaints were made, we are not now called upon to determine, since it cannot be pretended, that the measures of France were of such a nature as to preclude the possibility of adjustment by negotiation; and it is impossible to deny, that the power which shuts up the channel of accommodation, must be the real aggressor in war. To reject negotiation is to determine on hostilities; and, whatever may have been the nature of the points in question, between us and France, we cannot but pronounce the refusal of such an authorized communication with that country as might have amicably terminated the dispute, to be the true and immediate cause of the rupture which followed.

" Nor can we forbear to remark, that the pretences under which his Majesty's Ministers then haughtily refused such authorized communication, have been sufficiently exposed by their own conduct, in since submitting to a similar intercourse with the same government.

" The misguided policy which thus rendered the war inevitable, appears to have actuated Ministers in their determination to continue it at all hazards. At the same time, we cannot but observe, that the obstinacy with which they have adhered to their desperate system is not more remarkable than their versatility in the pretext upon which they have justified it. At one period the strength, at another the weakness, of the enemy, have been urged as motives for continuing the war; the successes, as well as the defeats, of the allies, have contributed only to prolong the contest; and hope and despair have equally served to involve us still deeper in the horrors of war, and to entail upon us an endless train of calamities. After the original professed objects had been obtained by the expulsion of the French armies from the territories of Holland, and the Austrian Netherlands, we find his Majesty's Ministers, influenced either by arrogance, or infatuated by ambition, and vain hope of conquests, which, if realized, could never compensate to the nation for the blood and treasure by which they must be obtained, rejecting, unheard, the overtures made by the Executive Council of France, at a period when the circumstances were so eminently favourable to his Majesty, and his allies, that there is every reason to suppose, that a negotiation, commenced at such a juncture, must have terminated in an honourable and advantageous peace: to the prospects arising from such an opportunity they preferred a blind, and obstinate, perseverance in a war, which could scarce have any remaining object but the unjustifiable purpose of imposing upon France a government disapproved of by the inhabitants of that country. And such was the infatuation of these Ministers, that, far from being able to frame a wise and comprehensive system of policy, they even rejected the few advantages that belonged to their own unfortunate scheme. The general existence of a design to interpose in the internal government of France was too manifest not to rouse into active hostility the national zeal of that people; but their particular projects were too equivocal to attract the confidence, or procure the co-operation, of those Frenchmen who were disaffected to the government of their country. The nature of these plans was too clear not to provoke formidable enemies, but their extent was too ambiguous to conciliate useful friends.

" We beg leave farther to represent to your Majesty, that, at subsequent periods, your Ministers have suffered the most favourable opportunities to escape, of obtaining an honourable and advantageous pacification. They did not avail themselves, as it was their duty to have done, of the unbroken strength of the general confederacy which had been formed against France, for the purpose of giving effect to overtures for negotiation. They saw the secession of several powerful states from that confederacy, they suffered it to dissolve without an effort for the attainment of general pacification. They loaded their country with the odium of having engaged it in a combination charged with the most questionable and unjustifiable views, without availing themselves of that combination for procuring favourable conditions of peace. That, from this fatal neglect, the progress of hostilities has only served to establish the evils which might certainly have been avoided by negotiation, but which are now confirmed by the event of the war. We have felt that the unjustifiable and impracti-

cable efforts to establish royalty in France, by force, have only proved fatal to its unfortunate supporters. We have seen, with regret, the subjugation of Holland, and the aggrandizement of the French Republic; and we have to lament the alteration in the state of Europe, not only from the successes of the French, but from the formidable acquisitions of some of the allied powers on the side of Poland,—acquisitions alarming from their magnitude, but still more so from the manner in which they have been made; thus fatally learning, that the war has tended alone to establish the very evils for the prevention of which it was avowedly undertaken.

" That we now therefore approach his Majesty to assure him, that his faithful Commons heard, with the sincerest satisfaction, his Majesty's most gracious Message, of the 8th of December, wherein his Majesty acquaints them, that the crisis which was depending, at the commencement of the present session, had led to such an order of things, as would induce his Majesty to meet any disposition to negotiation on the part of the enemy, with an earnest desire to give it the fullest and speediest effect, and to conclude a general treaty of peace, whenever it could be effected on just and equitable terms, for himself and his allies.

" That, from this gracious communication, they were led to hope for a speedy termination to this most disastrous contest; but that, with surprise and sorrow, they have now reason to apprehend, that three months were suffered to elapse before any steps were taken towards a negotiation, or any overtures made by his Majesty's servants.

" With equal surprise and concern they have observed, when a fair and open conduct was so peculiarly incumbent on his Majesty's Ministers, considering the prejudices and suspicions which their previous conduct must have excited in the minds of the French; that, instead of adopting the open and manly manner which became the wisdom, the character, and the dignity of the British nation, they adopted a mode calculated rather to excite suspicion, than to inspire confidence in the enemy. Every expression which might be construed into an acknowledgement of the French Republic, or even an allusion to its forms were studiously avoided; and the Minister, through whom this overture was made, was, in a most unprecedented manner, instructed to declare, that he had no authority to enter into any negotiation or discussion, relative to the objects of the proposed treaty.

" That it is with pain we reflect that the alacrity of his Majesty's Ministers, in apparently breaking off this incipient negotiation, as well as the strange and unusual manner in which it was announced to the Ministers of the various powers of Europe, affords a very unfavourable comment on their reluctance in entering upon it, and is calculated to make the most injurious impression respecting their sincerity on the people of France. On a review of many instances of gross and flagrant misconduct, proceeding from the same pernicious principles, and directed with incorrigible obstinacy to the same mischievous ends, we deem ourselves bound in duty to his Majesty and to our constituents, to declare, that we see no rational hope of redeeming the affairs of the kingdom, but by the adoption of a system radically and fundamentally different from that which has produced our present calamities. Until his Majesty's Ministers shall, from a real conviction of past errors, appear inclined to regulate

their conduct upon such a system, we can neither give any credit to the sincerity of their professions of a wish for peace, nor repose any confidence in their capacity for conducting a negotiation to a prosperous issue. Odious as they are to an enemy, who must still believe them strictly to cherish those unprincipled and chimerical projects which they have been compelled in public to disavow, contemptible in the eyes of all Europe from the display of insincerity and incapacity which has marked their conduct, our only hopes rest on his Majesty's royal wisdom, and unquestioned affection for his people, that he will be graciously pleased to adopt maxims of policy more suited to the circumstances of the times than those by which his Ministers appeared to have been governed, and to direct his servants to take measures, which, by differing essentially, as well in their tendency as in the principle upon which they are founded, from those which have hitherto marked their conduct, may give this country some reasonable hope, at no very distant period, of the establishment of peace suitable to the interests of Great Britain, and likely to preserve the tranquillity of Europe."

END OF VOL. II.

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